

## to catch a sunbeam with white moonlight

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/37414021) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/37414021>.

Rating:	<a href="#">General Audiences</a>
Archive Warning:	<a href="#">No Archive Warnings Apply</a>
Categories:	<a href="#">F/M</a> , <a href="#">Gen</a> , <a href="#">M/M</a>
Fandoms:	<a href="#">全职高手</a>   <a href="#">The King's Avatar (Cartoon)</a> , <a href="#">全职高手 - 蝴蝶蓝</a>   <a href="#">Quánzhí Gāoshǒu - Húdié Lán</a>
Relationships:	<a href="#">Dai Yanqi/Ye Xiu</a> , <a href="#">Dai Yanqi &amp; Ye Xiu</a> , <a href="#">Chu Yunxiu &amp; Dai Yanqi &amp; Su Mucheng</a> , <a href="#">Xiao Shiqin &amp; Yè Xiū</a> , <a href="#">Lei Ting</a>   <a href="#">Team Thunderclap &amp; Ye Xiu</a>
Characters:	<a href="#">Yè Xiū</a> , <a href="#">Dai Yanqi</a> , <a href="#">Su Mucheng</a> , <a href="#">Chu Yunxiu</a> , <a href="#">Xiao Shiqin</a> , <a href="#">Lei Ting</a>   <a href="#">Team Thunderclap</a> , <a href="#">Chén Guǒ</a>
Additional Tags:	<a href="#">Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence</a> , <a href="#">Minor Sū Mùqiū/Yè Xiū</a> , <a href="#">Minor Yè Xiū/Everyone</a> , <a href="#">Different Team Ye Xiu</a> , <a href="#">Thunderclap Ye Xiu</a> , <a href="#">Thunderclap Su Mucheng</a>
Language:	English
Series:	Part 4 of <a href="#">Memories of a Friend who Played Glory Well</a>
Stats:	Published: 2022-03-02 Completed: 2022-03-17 Words: 55,720 Chapters: 6/6

# to catch a sunbeam with white moonlight

by [orphan\\_account](#)

## Summary

At a Glory convention, Dai Yanqi meets Ye Xiu who is helping Su Mucheng buy her favorite doujinshi. They surprisingly hit it off as they browse through all the doujinshi about their peers and talk about Glory.

### Features:

- Dai Yanqi learning about Su Muqiu and writing a Sanxiu book for Ye Xiu
- Ye Xiu helping Dai Yanqi train in Glory
- Fashion designer hobbyist Dai Yanqi and long-suffering Ye Xiu agreeing to wear the cosplay she made for him if she improves her records
- Thunderclap Ye Xiu and Thunderclap Su Mucheng
- The chaos associated with Ye Xiu antics; Dai Yanqi antics are not much better; Thunderclap are resigned enablers; Xiao Shiqin only has control over his gremlins a quarter of the time
- An accidental relationship reveal on QQ
- The uno reverse card of The Story of the Mary Sue Character the Excellent Era Captain Made Up and Ships Himself With (<-a reader said this and I can't stop laughing. So true! I'm putting it in the summary!)

## Notes

EDIT: I just realized that I made Dai Yanqi debut a year earlier. It's already written though

\\_('ヾ)\_/

## Fan Convention

Ye Qiu, captain of the three times championship team Excellent Era and user of Battle God One Autumn Leaf, was a hard person to meet in real life.

Even among the hundreds of pro players, there were still many who hadn't seen Ye Qiu's face before. For those who had, it was always just a brief glance, a quick coincidence before or after matches.

Fortunately, Dai Yanqi had seen Ye Qiu before, but that too was just a quick coincidence wherein she had saw his face for only one second before he opened the door and entered into his team's preparation room, smelling like smoke. She wasn't even sure that he saw her, the moment so quick that it seemed almost like a dream.

(And it was. Dai Yanqi always wanted to see what Ye Qiu looked like. That was one of the things on her list of goals upon finally entering the Pro Alliance and she saw him! Dai Yanqi was so happy that she almost lost control of her rhythm during the game. Xiao Shiqin noticed anyways and scolded her, reminding to keep her mental state calm for the next game. She happily nodded, nothing able to bring her down after finally seeing the God Ye Qiu!)

Anyways, Ye Qiu was a person that was really hard to meet. In a fan poll one time, he was voted to be even harder to encounter than a shiny legendary Pokemon, Nessie, and other mysterious beings, most not even real.

So when she saw him at a Glory fan convention during the winter break of her first season in the Alliance, Dai Yanqi nearly squealed with delight and shouted his name. She did- but Ye Qiu had quickly spotted her as well and placed his hand over her mouth, the speed almost as fast as he could click a mouse. Dai Yanqi nearly hyperventilated at that as well, not minding at all that she was being muffled. God Ye's hand was on her mouth! She was touching God Ye's beautiful hand! She was kissing God Ye's perfect hands!

But Ye Qiu immediately realized how impolite his reaction might be and pulled his hand away. He awkwardly gave a short laugh, "Sorry about that. Reflexes."

It was so cute. Dai Yanqi wanted to memorize it to add the scene into one of her doujinshis, but her mind rebooted and she quickly replied. "It's okay!" It really was! She didn't mind at all! Would even be happy to be able to feel his hand again! "But God- I mean, um, Ye Q- I mean, uh-"

"Just call me Ye Xiu." Ye Qiu- *Xiu* offered in amusement.

"Yes, God Y- I mean, Ye Xiu!" Dai Yanqi beamed, nodding eagerly to Ye Xiu's laugh. She wondered if her eyes were just glowing right now. She was so happy. "Ye Xiu!" She shouted, almost wanting to say that name a couple more times, "What brings you here?! I didn't know you knew these conventions existed as well- ah!"

As if reminded of why she herself was at the Glory fan convention, she quickly hid her bags behind her back. Ahhh, was her AllYe and AllXiao and other books going to be exposed?

The movement was too panicked and rushed to hide, especially before another pro player's eyes, but Ye Xiu laughed again, calming her. Her eyes widened when he also held up his own bag - a tote bag with fanart of Dancing Rain and One Autumn Leaf printed at its front - in show. His eyes sparkled in amusement. The last time she had saw him, it had been too fast and the angle was bad, but now that they were face to face and so close, Dai Yanqi realized that Ye Xiu's eyes were beautiful, a warm brown that almost seemed to have a golden light.

"It's okay." Ye Xiu huffed with quiet mirth, "I won't ask. Though I don't know if there's anything else to do at an event like this."

There wasn't. This Glory fan convention focused on the selling and buying of doujinshis, was a beautiful chance to meet the great artists and writers of countless beautiful works of art and fiction surrounding the members of the Glory Pro Alliance. But since that was the only thing offered here, that meant that God Ye being here meant that God Ye came for doujinshis!

"Y-you read doujinshis?!" It sounded unbelievable. Dai Yanqi felt as if her world just opened and her views all became renewed.

"Mucheng does." Ye Xiu said, making Dai Yanqi feel like the world was righted again. But her world was easily thrown to chaos again when Ye Xiu teasingly leaned down and confessed, "But I have read some of her favorites before." Dai Yanqi was stunned. Ye Xiu chuckled before straightening himself and looking around at the bustling crowds of Glory fans and content creators. "Although I normally don't go so far as to accompany her to places like this, she's sick today so she couldn't come to buy the books she wanted herself."

To make God Ye go out of his way to buy doujinshis for her. Dai Yanqi had heard that they had a good relationship, but she hadn't realized that it really was so good. She wondered a little about their relationship, but her mind couldn't focus on it as she already found herself stuck on a possibility, a dream that she always had before the Alliance. This too was on her bucket list.

Of course, it was hanging out with God Ye!

"Can we walk around together then?!" Dai Yanqi asked loudly, the words blurted out before she could think on it. "I mean," She flailed, realizing that she might have been too bold or eager or strong, "if you have any books you can't find, I can help you! I can also recommend some for Senior Su! I'll even buy them!" She flailed some more, finding herself a bit awkward. She normally didn't think she was awkward. "I promise I won't bother you!"

She was going to continue blurting out excuses and things, but a soft bag knocked the side of her head as Ye Xiu gently rapped the knuckles of his hand against her forehead. "Sure, we can walk together. You won't be a bother. It would be a help to have a companion and guide in this place."

Dai Yanqi stared at his smile and beamed, feeling like the luckiest fan and person in the world. "Yeah!"

---

Walking around the convention and browsing through most of the stalls with Ye Xiu was amazing.

Not only did he know a surprising lot about his fellow colleagues to be able to comment on the realism of a plot, but he also was really funny.

"How stingy! I expected a lot from Little Zhou, but to only be able to offer his lover such a small gift..." Ye Xiu mock-sighed and shook his head when he read the words on a doujinshi cover with Zhou Zekai holding hands with a random original female character. The words above him said: *I give all my words to you*. And Dai Yanqi giggled.

After seeing an art cover with apothecary owner Wang Jiexi and town guard Fang Shiqian, Ye Xiu chuckled and whispered, "Actually, it should be the opposite. Wang Jiexi's horrible with plants. It's Fang Shiqian that keeps them alive and knows his stuff." Dai Yanqi couldn't help herself. She quickly reached for her little notebook and jotted down yet another piece of inspiration that flashed through her head. She was getting so many ideas!

Ye Xiu just laughed and they continued going through every stall together, browsing through the fan-made wares at a leisurely pace. Had it not been for the occasional books that Ye Xiu would buy, Dai Yanqi would have almost forgot that he was here only to buy books for Su Mucheng, the time spent together feeling almost like an organized appointment to hang out made between old friends.

It was amazing how easy it actually was to get along with one of the most mysterious people in the alliance!

---

Although Dai Yanqi had a lot of books that she had wanted to buy from the Ye Qiu section, secret avid writer and lover of YeAll and AllYe, it was a bit awkward to even look in that area with the person himself standing right next to her.

Actually, it was embarrassing. Very embarrassing. Dai Yanqi was already privately apologizing to all of her fellow comrades who had chosen today to boldly post their drawings of Ye Xiu being kabedon-ed or kissed by others on the wooden posts of their stand or on the tablecloths of their table. If she could see it with one glance from this distance, she was sure that Ye Xiu who had the eyesight of a hawk could as well. Ahhh, maybe she should lead Ye Xiu the other way so that they could avoid that section and she could save her unsuspecting comrades from getting their fantasies seen by the god himself!

Ye Xiu chuckled and stopped her from turning around. "I don't mind." He said to Dai Yanqi's widening eyes. "I have to get a book from there anyways."

"Sister Su, you really are too brave!" Dai Yanqi cried out, forgetting to think it instead of say. To admit to wanting to read something about him and to get him to travel through the area of Ye Qiu fiction that might be a little *uninhibited*... She was already blushing from thinking

about the content she knew was there (and she did want and plan to get), but to get God Ye to go? Bold! Too bold!

"No, no," Ye Xiu corrected, "I asked her to just tell me."

His voice dropped into a secretive whisper as he placed a finger above his lips. "Don't tell Mucheng, but when she wants something but won't say it, her head dips a little and her fingers tend to fidget."

Dai Yanqi was a little dazzled by how attentive God Ye was and how tender his voice could get when talking about his best partner. An answer to her earlier question about what these two were to each other was forming in her heart and Dai Yanqi melted at the sweet imaginations in her mind of a brotherly God Ye looking out for and always wanting to give the best to his little sister. Sweet. Heart-warming fluff! Dai Yanqi was more of a romance writer, but she loved this genre too.

"And I really don't mind." Ye Xiu said with not a single dust of red on his cheeks or ears or neck. "I've told you that I've read doujinshi before. I've also thought of it before."

It took a while for Dai Yanqi to comprehend it and then her eyes widened again, her legs already moving to inch closer to him. "You have?" She asked, her voice almost like a wonder-filled whisper. "With who?"

Ye Xiu chuckled, but shook his head, "You wouldn't know him."

"Someone outside of Glory?!" Dai Yanqi asked in a loud whisper, stunned, having not even known that Ye Xiu would know anyone outside their circle or liked anyone who didn't play Glory well.

Then again, that Ye Xiu liked anyone at all or at least thought of a relationship was something beyond all of her imagination. Even outside of the pro players, male or female, almost every Glory fan she knew thought that the God Ye only thought of Glory. They had ships, of course, and loved to write and draw many things about God Ye with another pro player or even avatar, but everyone thought that the only real one true pairing was him and Glory.

Ye Xiu laughed, not at all bothered by her amazement or their conversation. Instead, he teased, "Did you pair me with Old Han?"

"Yes!" Dai Yanqi automatically shouted before her dazzled brain turned back on again and she panicked, "I mean no. No." It technically wasn't wrong. She paired him with a lot more people than that. But she wasn't going to tell him that. Dai Yanqi glared at Ye Xiu, feeling like she had been tricked into confessing, her cheeks flushed with a little embarrassment at being caught by her favorite target in writing fiction.

Ye Xiu held his hands up in playful surrender, smiling, "It's fine. I get it. Ten years rivalry, is it? Such a long sentiment would make a good romance novel."

And there was so much more too! Dai Yanqi could squeal and tell him all her feelings about HanYe all day, but she pressed her lips, forcing herself to not fangirl about the pairing in front

of God Ye himself. She couldn't help but smile widely though at Ye Xiu's acknowledgment, feeling a lot less guilty about writing about her peers and imagining these things with how okay he seemed with it. (Good, because after today, she had so many things she wanted to write. Her fingers were *itching* for a computer.)

"It would have been ten years with that guy too." Dai Yanqi's eyes widened. She looked up and saw an impossible softness in her senior's eyes, an unspeakable emotion that caught her and would not let her move. "He had played too. He had played Glory very well."

There was sorrow-filled grief and tender, pain-prickling nostalgia in his voice. Dai Yanqi was stricken. She had never lost someone or had someone dear to her lose someone, but she realized that this was what it was. Her heart reached for him, her hand too, but at the same time she didn't know what to say or if she could say.

She didn't have to, Ye Xiu being attentive as always even when he was lost in his thoughts and he joked, lightening the mood with a gesture to a heavily censored poster in the AllYe section that they were now already in.

"Of course not like that though." He laughed.

Dai Yanqi wanted to go up and take down the poster for the fan artist herself. Her soul nearly leapt out of herself, her mind crying 'Sister!' for that poor artist who didn't know that God Ye had seen it. Had just now personally seen her fanart of him being... Dai Yanqi's face steamed red and she covered her face, now thinking that Su Mucheng's and her doujinshi could wait later. She should do everyone here a favor and take God Ye out of the convention.

Her mouth opened to suggest a break to God Ye, but she stopped when she turned to see Ye Xiu actually looking through the books and drawings of him. His eyes scanned the section, taking more time with the doujinshis with original characters. He had been to a Glory fan convention before, she suddenly remembered. With Su Mucheng, but he had been to one before and this wasn't the first.

In those previous times, she wondered if he had looked through his section before just as he was now. She wondered if Ye Xiu had looked through countless fictional stories pairing him with other pro players and even other people and strangers, looking and looking, but never finding the one he wanted. A story about him and that friend he was talking about that had played Glory well.

*It would have been ten years with that guy too.*

She wondered if he sometimes looked through the things written about himself and looked for a story like that too. One where his friend had lived and they had played Glory together, a long ten years, this time not of rivalry but of friendship and comradeship throughout the years.

Although Ye Xiu said that he had thought of it, it probably wasn't even in the context of love.

It probably wasn't even love, but rather it was just a deep friendship that could make him relate to some of the purest BLs. These kind of romantic fan stories probably wasn't what he

was looking for or wanting, but a part of him couldn't help but unconsciously look for a memory, something that said he was there, he had been there with him by his side, a connection deeper than anything else, and everyone knew it.

But no one did. Not here. Not in the years before. There were stories written pairing him with non-professional gamers and original characters, but none were written about that friend or someone remotely similar to him. No one knew that God Ye even had such a friend, that there had been someone he admired and liked so much that he had thought that he could have remained by his side for ten years even in the competitive e-sports league.

Countless stories of him and other pro players. No one knew of the relationship God Ye thought of and wanted to see the most.

There was a white moonlight in God Ye's heart. Its luminance was so brilliant and bright, its beauty so great that all the world should be able to have the blessing to see, but only God Ye knew of its unshared glory. Only God Ye knew of it and was looking for that brilliant glory that had shined but would never appear again.

It shouldn't be so.

"God Ye?" She spoke, a quiet whisper to not attract a mob of fans. There was only one person she wanted the attention of. Ye Xiu looked up at her, quietly waiting when he saw her expression. She gulped. She didn't know if she had the right to ask, but she wanted this so badly. "Can you tell me more about this person?"

Ye Xiu was surprised for a moment, but his expression softened and he easily nodded with a smile, "Sure. I don't mind talking about him."

Dai Yanqi's heart pounded as she continued, "Can I also write a story about you two?"

This time, Ye Xiu was stunned- and Dai Yanqi was too, awestruck at his face, at every emotion and rising yearn within his eyes. She had put that look on God Ye's face.

"Yes," Ye Xiu said, almost strongly, but he wasn't the kind to like to show his strongest emotions so he restrained his wild gestures and touched his head, chuckling and keeping to himself as if to laugh off all of the intense depths within him, as if he couldn't restrain his hands, he would be shaking hers or her shoulders with great eagerness or joy. Dai Yanqi had never saw God Ye like that, so happy and light as if all the burdens had flown away, eyes so bright like he had just seen light for the first time in years and he wanted to relish it.

She never and she thought that it was the most beautiful thing in the world. Her hand wanted to capture it forever in her sketchbooks. She didn't think anything in the world could ever make her so happy as she was now, seeing God Ye so lucently happy like this.

"But nothing more than kissing, okay?" He joked, trying to hide some of his joy but it radiated from his being, unstoppable, breathtaking. "He's Mucheng's brother so there can't be any of *those* scenes."



Dai Yanqi didn't even respond to the shocking information that Su Mucheng had a brother, so rapt by Ye Xiu's radiant light. His smile was like sunflowers in summer. With it, she felt like they had just won a championship after a long fight.

"Okay."

Dai Yanqi swore that she would write Ye Xiu the story he wanted the most to see.

## Process

They sat at a table in a café not too far from the convention center, their bags of books settled at their side and two cups of tea placed before them.

Dai Yanqi didn't know why she ordered hers. Her attention was fully caught by Ye Xiu. She watched him as he looked down at his cup, his elegant hands around its ceramic body as he dwelled in his thoughts. He deserved to be called a top god. Even in reminiscence, his hands were stable, the surface of the tea calm without any ripple.

Dai Yanqi patiently waited. She had never waited for so long, but she thought she could wait for a lifetime like the sentiments of so many gentle lovers in BL novels.

Ye Xiu didn't keep her for so long though, his voice quiet with remembrance.

"He played very well." He repeated softly, "We often fought together for dungeons and wild BOSS. When we fought in the arena," Ye Xiu chuckled, "I had a much higher score. He kept track of the wins and losses in a notebook, that guy." Ye Xiu reminscenced. "But even though I'm better, he wasn't bad at all. He would have been better than Zhou Zekai."

"Even better than Captain Zhou?" Dai Yanqi finally spoke, a bit stunned that there was someone else who could contend as one of the top great gods. Who would have been one had fate been more kind. Her heart tinged with a bit of regret, who wouldn't upon hearing that they lost a player who could have shown masterful plays, but it was nothing compared to the regret in Ye Xiu's voice.

"Yes..." Ye Xiu said before absently correcting in whispers to himself, "Or no. That wouldn't be fair to Little Zhou. Right now, Little Zhou is better. Glory has improved a lot over the years and he has more time... but I imagine if that guy was still around, hadn't stopped, continued Glory, he wouldn't have been worse off than me."

A glory worthy to be called the first in the alliance. Dai Yanqi felt regret that she couldn't see it. Even if he would have been a rival, another powerful enemy that would drive her captain mad, she would have still wanted to see it, just as any player in Glory who loved the game and loved the masterful battles within it would have wanted to see it. Strength and skill, the gorgeous operations of a powerful player.

It would have been an amazing sight to see. Dancing Rain and One Autumn Leaf and that guy standing side to side, an iron triangle, unbreakable and domineering as they charged through the battlefield fighting and supporting one another. She had never seen the invincible Battle God other than in a few videos of the first seasons, but she imagined that such a One Autumn Leaf with two strong partners at his side would have been outstanding.

After a quiet lingering pause of sentiment, Ye Xiu continued speaking of his friend, telling countless stories in game and out. Dai Yanqi couldn't look away, not from the images of double autumn roaming across the game world and terrorizing all the people with incredible feats, not from the lingering joys in Ye Xiu's voice as he recalled those happy moments. Dai

Yanqi couldn't look away, her breath taken by the soft nostalgia in his eyes as he shared his friend and the glory of their youth spent together.

"Everyone would have loved him." Ye Xiu said fondly, "He loved to talk and show off. He would have made the public appearances. He would have more things to say on the QQ."

There was a little of *'It should have been me instead of him'* mixed in his words, but Dai Yanqi didn't address it for now, not wanting to stop Ye Xiu's elation, his happiness in being able to share his friend being like a river of water gushing forth from a broken dam. She could listen to him forever. The fans possibly would love Su Muqiu more, but Dai Yanqi thought that she would have still loved Ye Xiu more, so much more. He shone so much, he was already an irreplaceable part of Glory and the alliance, and she was sure that this day would always be a priceless treasure in her heart.

But she remained quiet and listened, loving every ray of light in Ye Xiu's eyes and every bit of joy in Ye Xiu's voice. His lips upturned in a never ending smile and he lost the calm he had since they first walked in the café, the tea in his cup constantly rippling from his gestures and bubbling excitement.

Sunset passed, forcing the street lights to turn on to illumine the night. They had met in the fan convention in the morning, entered the café in early noon, and yet the entire day had already passed without their knowing.

Ye Xiu paid for the both of them and gave a generous tip to the waitress for allowing them to stay so long despite having not ordered much. The waitress blushed and tried to refuse, saying that it was okay, but Ye Xiu insisted and so, the café got a generous tip. Dai Yanqi could understand. Ye Xiu wasn't Zhou Zekai, but right now, she thought that the god could give even Zhou Zekai a run for his money.

He was just so happy. Like a cat that had gone out and caught a bird, received a couple snacks and a fish, and came home after basking in the best spot of town for a good chunk of the day. He still was smiling, looking like each moment his mouth opened, there would spill out his signature huffs of laughter.

"I took up your whole day." Ye Xiu said, a bit apologetically, as they walked out. The convention wasn't held in either of their cities. They both had been planning to take a flight back in the late afternoon, but it seemed that they might need to stay in a hotel and wait another day since it was so dark out.

Dai Yanqi didn't mind. It was worth it. This had been her best day ever. She said as much, happily bouncing at Ye Xiu's side. She actually wasn't so energetic, but she noticed that the more exaggerated she was, the more amused Ye Xiu was and seeing his amusement always filled her with more energy than she could ever need.

"No, no, I enjoyed it! I even wanted it!" She had been the one to ask Ye Xiu to walk with her around the convention when he could just buy the books and go. She also had been the one who wanted to hear everything, all the stories of him and his dear friend, Su Mucheng's brother. If there was anyone who should apologize, it should be her, but after being with Ye Xiu for so long that they now felt like close friends and hearing some of their more shameless

stunts, Dai Yanqi couldn't help but run a little ahead and spin to face and stop Ye Xiu in his tracks. A shameless grin stretched across her face as she said, "But if you're really sorry, you can take me to an Internet café and teach me some tricks in Glory!"

She never wanted the day to end.

Ye Xiu laughed. He easily agreed with a nod, "Okay. Let's go."

They did a little mix of everything.

Having only planned a short one day trip, neither of them brought their account cards so Ye Xiu had to purchase leveled accounts from the counter. While he did that, Dai Yanqi couldn't help but log onto her email and write down everything she wanted to write onto a new draft. She had so much she wanted to say and remember, but she also didn't want to keep Ye Xiu waiting for too long so she wrote in bullet points the main things she wanted to write and convey. To her surprise, Ye Xiu hadn't minded at all.

After telling Su Mucheng that he'd come back much later, Ye Xiu took a glance at her computer and even offered some ideas for not just the story of him and Su Muqiu, but also of the other pro player pairings that Dai Yanqi had thought of during the convention. Dai Yanqi internally died of happiness. She never had a male friend who she could talk about these things to, much less a pro player male friend that she could discuss her favorite ships with. God Ye might not be very interested, but he was a very tolerant and good listener and his insight and ideas were incredible.

Su Mucheng was really lucky. She had the best brother in the world.

She also was really lucky. Dai Yanqi smiled happily to herself. She got to meet God Ye and find out so many good things in the world. *(There really was a good reason why Captain and so many other pro players liked the elusive god-level player that rarely anyone else had ever seen.) (She was becoming one of them.)*

"You're Fire Phoenix Rebirth?" Ye Xiu asked in amusement when she sent him her home page.

She had struggled internally a lot over whether or not to let him know because she had a lot of AllYe and other pairings with God Ye in her archive among *many* other things, but she gave it to him in the end. Dai Yanqi wanted him to know that she had experience and she wasn't going to let him down. She really did want to write a good story, *the best story*, for him and his friend.

Still, it was an internal struggle. Dai Yanqi was squirming on the inside, a little anxious over what Ye Xiu thought.

"Mucheng likes your works. She thought the YuHuang series was one of the best of its kind."

"Really?! Senior Su read my works?! She liked Winters in Danxia Mountain?!"

"Of course she did. The characterization was superb. It was also a good setting. Yu Wenzhou would make a good mountain god. Having Huang Shaotian an injured fox spirit that was saved by him and then having the two live together and grow affection and protective feelings over each other through the many dangers of the cursed environment and enemies of the past was also a nice touch."

Dai Yanqi's eyes widened so very wide before she buried her reddened face into her hands. God Ye read her works too! He probably only read it because Su Mucheng recommended it, but he read her works and liked it!

"You're a very good writer." Ye Xiu praised, "I look forward to your works."

Dai Yanqi's neck burned from the praise and thought that Ye Xiu would be looking forward to, reading, and enjoying her next works, not just the Sanxiu story she wanted to write for him but also the many others. Suddenly, her spirit alighted and she sat upright and saluted. "I will do my best for the organization!"

Ye Xiu laughed. Dai Yanqi would never get tired of hearing it. His lips upturned again and he tapped her on the forehead with something. "That won't be too good. Little Xiao would get mad at me if I distract and turn his rookie away too much from Glory. To make up for it, I should check on the rookie once in a while and make sure she's still on her way to reaching the peak."

Dai Yanqi beamed, holding Ye Xiu's hand and the account card he tapped her with. "Please! Please coach me, God Y-"

Like a replay of this morning at the convention, Ye Xiu quickly covered her mouth, muffling the end of her shout. Some people near them in the Internet café glanced towards them, a little curious, but otherwise looked away. Ye Xiu sighed in relief. Dai Yanqi gave him a sheepish expression. She was having such a good time that she forgot that they were still in an Internet café surrounded by Glory players. While no one knew what Ye Xiu looked like and Dai Yanqi was a rookie, Dai Yanqi wasn't wearing a mask so it was possible that if someone took a closer look after hearing her shout God Ye, they would recognize her and then think that the person next to her really was God Ye.

"Please coach me, Ye Xiu?" Dai Yanqi asked innocently, her skin a little less thick, but she would still do anything to keep Ye Xiu's offer of periodic coaching. Or to just keep contacting her favorite pro player.

Ye Xiu gave her an amused look and even chuckled, shaking his head, causing her to burst out a grin as well.

"Okay," Ye Xiu agreed, handing her the account card and tapping his own against his lips. "Since I already bought them, let's not put these to waste today either."

"Yes!" Dai Yanqi happily shouted, saving her work and exiting out of all the open windows. As she logged onto Glory with the new account card, she noticed the time and almost did a double take at how they had spent a full three hours in the Internet café together without even once turning to Glory.

"Room 520, password same as room number."

Though she was sure that they would be playing Glory together for the rest of the night. As she set her skill points and checked her stats and equipment, her blood boiled, burning away all thoughts of sleep. She was excited.

---

Five rounds in, Ye Xiu laughed when he saw Dai Yanqi peek at his screen again. They were sitting next to each other so cheating like this was very easy. Although it wouldn't help her much, the difference between their skill levels much too large for a handicap like this from him to help her, he still knocked her away with a little flick on the forehead.

"Shameless."

Dai Yanqi unashamedly puffed up as if it was a compliment. She grinned, retorting back, "Had it been someone like Captain Zhou here, wouldn't you do it?"

"I wouldn't need to." Ye Xiu huffed before admitting with his own grin, "But I would to mess with him."

"Exactly!" Dai Yanqi laughed. Had her hands not been focused on controlling her Elementalist, she would have been clapping gleefully at getting Ye Xiu's shameless confession.

Ye Xiu smiled, but pointedly gestured with his head to her screen. "But you should keep looking at your own screen. You don't get so many chances to play serious high level matches." He smirked, "Not that I'm serious right now."

Dai Yanqi's spirit flared again and her hand speed increased a little once their two Elementarists found each other. "I'll force you!"

"We'll see."

To her pout, it really seemed that Ye Xiu never had to go all out on her. That many people thought that his skill was declining was baffling. She was happy to have so many high quality coaching videos to study from now though! They continued fighting a little longer, a more relaxed PvP, before cooling down with an even more relaxed dungeon run on the sixth server.

Even though it was the sixth server and not the first, Dai Yanqi couldn't help but ask excitedly now that she was in the game with Ye Xiu,

"So where's the place where you first fought Desert Dust with One Autumn Leaf?!"

Ye Xiu was amused. Although he knew that she was probably going to use it as reference for her stories, he still took her to the canyon and recounted the story. He privately thought that it was nice to have someone other than Mucheng to recount stories of the past with. Barely anyone other than her listened to him nowadays, and while he was fine with listening to

others, even Huang Shaotian when he asks for his PKs, he really missed being able to talk about Glory and the people he loved at long lengths with other people.

Han Wenqing didn't know him as much, Wei Chen retired, Tao Xuan had stopped talking about him for a long time, and it seemed only Mucheng knew Muqiu, but now there was one more. Another person who even wanted to write a story to share his glory with others. Su Mucheng and Ye Xiu were a little selfish, wanting to keep his memory to themselves like a precious hidden treasure, but they also always wanted people to know that there was such a brilliant person in glory and not allow his memory to fade away.

That there was this kind of person who was willing to do this for Muqiu even before they knew him was nice.

Ye Xiu still had a lot of energy and wouldn't mind continuing to play all night, but he was still a responsible person so it was time to get his seatmate to go to sleep. Although she had so much energy a while ago, it seemed that the lull was finally enough to have the 1 am time and day's built up fatigue crash on her and her head nodded a little like Mucheng's when she was tired after training for so long.

Reaching over, he helped them both log out and nudged her shoulder, "Little Dai, wake up. I'll take you back."

"Okay," She nodded without resistance before spotting her new Elementalist card in his hand. She snatched it, asking with pleading eyes, "I can keep it, right? I can keep it, right? I didn't download the coaching video onto my cloud yet."

Ye Xiu chuckled, easily letting her have it. "Of course. Take it. Upgrade the equipment and we can play again with these accounts next time."

"Yes!" Dai Yanqi happily shouted, even twirling with her card in excitement. So excited to get beaten by him, Ye Xiu mentally joked.

The night was cold when they walked out of the cozy Internet café. Ye Xiu didn't mind when Dai Yanqi huddled at his side as they walked, her cold hands slipping into his hidden one in his coat pocket. Rather, although they had gotten much closer throughout the day, he was surprised that she felt comfortable enough to do this.

But it truly was cold.

They squeezed each other's hands, warming them up a little. The wind blew, but Ye Xiu stood such that he would take the bulk of it.

They were quiet as they walked to a hotel. When they got to one, Ye Xiu waited until Dai Yanqi confirmed that there was an available room for her to take.

There was. Dai Yanqi smiled as she returned to tell Ye Xiu who had waited in the lounge for her.

"Ye Xiu! Thank you for today!"

"You too." Ye Xiu replied back, standing to make his trip to the airport.

Before Dai Yanqi let him go though, she asked, "For the story," She didn't need to explain which one. They both knew that very well. "Is there anything you want to say to him?"

Ye Xiu thought for a moment before smiling, "The world is brilliant and magnificent. Welcome home."

"Okay!" Dai Yanqi smiled as well before waving and seeing Ye Xiu off, "I'll message you whenever I have questions or a new chapter!"

"Okay! Tell me when you have time to PK every week as well." Ye Xiu said and Dai Yanqi beamed,

"Definitely!"

They both separated, Ye Xiu disappearing out of the hotel and Dai Yanqi heading to her room. When she opened the door, she suddenly realized why that line sounded so deep and familiar.

It was from a BL novel!

Ye Xiu read BL too! Dai Yanqi suddenly felt like she couldn't sleep anymore. The hotel was probably going to find her bed messy from all her rolling and excited screaming into her pillow.

She was going to die because of this man! Although he probably only read it because of Su Mucheng, how could he be so perfect and cute to read and memorize favorite lines from BL novel!

Although the reason why she loved writing and supporting AllYe was because she and the other female pro players really did suspect that the one-sided boy crushes were real, at this rate, she was going to steal God Ye. No, she really was going to steal God Ye. Dai Yanqi apologized to her captain in her heart, pounded her pillow a little more, and then fell asleep while beginning to think of plans.



## Season 7 and Summer

The relationship between Ye Xiu and Dai Yanqi was a very curious thing.

It was also something that was surprisingly hard to notice despite how often they talked to each other.

Su Mucheng only caught on when her favorite Glory doujinshi writer and artist posted an amazing series about Ye Xiu and an original male character who was extremely similar to her big brother. No, they were almost 100% the same and the stories were even too similar for it to just be a coincidence.

"Ye Xiu!" Su Mucheng shouted, bursting into Ye Xiu's room with her laptop, frantically wanting to find him and show him. She needed to. There were only five chapters now, and Su Mucheng still couldn't believe she didn't find out about her favorite author's latest work (*this work*) until now, but she needed to show Ye Xiu. Catching him at his computer, she ran up and grabbed his shoulder with one hand, shoving her laptop in his face with her other, "Look-!"

Her voice cut off when she saw Ye Xiu's eyes, slightly more wet than normal, and she looked to the side to see a document open on his computer, some boxes on the side and marks indicating corrections and comments. A name caught her attention and Su Mucheng forgot about showing Ye Xiu her discovery to look closer at what Ye Xiu was doing.

Her already constrained throat felt even more wet and choked.

"Ye Xiu, is that the next chapter to A Summer Ten Years Ago?"

It was. Su Mucheng could recognize that name, *her brother's name*, anywhere and now she could also recognize her favorite author's writing and this work's storyline. She only read it once through before she needed to go see Ye Xiu, but she would remember it in an instant because it was the story of *their* past. A story she would read and read over and over again and forever cherish and love.

What was on the screen wasn't anything that was posted yet, but she knew it had to be the continuation. Why was it on Ye Xiu's screen? He was editing it too...?

"Remember the convention you missed? I saw Little Dai there and we talked a little. Muqiu came up and she wanted to write it. A story about us." Ye Xiu confessed. He honestly should have said it a long time ago, but he didn't know how to bring it up. Su Mucheng didn't yell at him though. Instead, she hugged him, wrapping him awkwardly with laptop still at hand and Ye Xiu still sitting in his gaming chair.

"I want in." She said wetly into his shoulder, "I want to be a part of this as well."

"Okay." Ye Xiu agreed, gently separating her laptop from her shaking hand and putting it on the table so that he could safely hug her back. Feeling her tremors and sniffles, all of a

sudden, he didn't feel so composed either, but he didn't want to wet her shirt so he held back. "We'll make a group chat."

Later, Dai Yanqi happily greeted Su Mucheng and apologized for having forgot to tell her. Su Mucheng happily greeted her back, blamed Ye Xiu for having been left out, and then excitedly talked to her about her previous works and also her plans for the story about her brother. Ye Xiu quietly and helplessly accepted the blame and watched happily as the two talked and interacted.

**Dancing Rain:** We didn't have a camera back then, but Tao Xuan took a picture for us when they were going to start Excellent Era.

**Dancing Rain:** [photo of Su Muqiu and Ye Xiu adjusting the red maple leaf emblem of Excellent Era onto the wall]

Dai Yanqi didn't say how her eyes had been attracted by the young God Ye first. Su Muqiu's looks also made her squeal in delight however. She was going to draw many fanarts of them together for the story!!

**Firebird Messenger:** Thank you so much, Senior Su! Can I use them to draw a cover for the story?

**Dancing Rain:** Yes! And you can just call me Mumu.

**Firebird Messenger:** Thanks! And you can call me anything you want as well!

**One Autumn Leaf:** Although Glory hasn't come out in the story yet, this was what Autumn Tree looked like.

**One Autumn Leaf:** [screenshot of One Autumn Leaf and Autumn Tree together]

**Firebird Messenger:** Kyaaa!!! So handsome! I want to make cosplay now! Ye Xiu! What do you think about wearing cosplay?!

**One Autumn Leaf:** No.

**Dancing Rain:** You make cosplay too?! Ye Xiu! [pleading eyes]

**Firebird Messenger:** [pleading eyes]

**Dancing Rain:** [pleading eyes]

Just as the three moving dots appeared, signifying that Dai Yanqi was going to continue the chain, Ye Xiu already saw the real life pleading eyes expression on Mucheng who was still sitting right next to him and he relented. Su Mucheng cheered.

**One Autumn Leaf:** Ugh.

**Dancing Rain:** [dancing rain jump-shouts yay!]

**Firebird Messenger:** [firebird messenger jump-shouts yay!]

**One Autumn Leaf:** But only if you both improve your records. I won't ask for a screenshot of your training records because that is a team secret, but I will be looking at your match results, Little Dai. Only one costume per win against a mid-tier or higher pro in the individual or group challenges or per MVP in a team challenge. The photo will be privately taken and cannot be seen or shared with anyone other than yourselves.

While Su Mucheng was fine with the conditions, she whistled at the prerequisite condition Ye Xiu gave to *still-a-rookie* Dai Yanqi. It can be seen that Ye Xiu really didn't want to model, much less wear cosplay.

**Firebird Messenger:** Awww

**One Autumn Leaf:** No deal? That's fine with me too

**Firebird Messenger:** Wait God Ye! I didn't say that! Deal deal deal

But Su Mucheng giggled to herself because Ye Xiu underestimated how much girls like them would want to see Ye Xiu dressed well (and dressed in *other* outfits). Ye Xiu gave her a wary look, but happily concluded the deal.

**One Autumn Leaf:** Okay.

He trusted the veteran pros not to give her a chance. Glory was not that easy.

In a private chat, Su Mucheng happily offered to provide extra training to the rookie Elementalist and both blazed with determination to get Ye Xiu to wear a cat boy outfit among other things at the end of the season.

The poor unsuspecting man had no idea what he had just unleashed on not just him, but also the rest of the league.

---

Ye Xiu couldn't help but burst with laughter when Dai Yanqi wrote excerpts of Glory doujinshi on the public channel in a pro match, throwing all of Blue Rain off guard and securing a major opportunity that Xiao Shiqin resignedly took advantage of.

Later, Huang Shaotian spammed his QQ, telling him not to believe anything that was being said as the Glory forums and Weibo blazed with countless screams of YuHuang, WangHuang, and YuWang and the possible love affairs going on between the two rival teams. Yu Wenzhou and Wang Jiexi, who had been an unfortunate casualty of the game he had not even been a part of, also entreated him not to watch the game videos much less search up the meaning of the terms being tossed about.

Jokes on them. He had already watched it a long time ago and yes, he did know the common pairings of Glory. He even discussed them with the perpetrator of this chaos in a Glory fan convention not so long ago. Ye Xiu shook his head too amused.

While it was Xiao Shiqin who had ultimately played the most important role in that team challenge with how he had successfully used the opportunity and cut off Blue Rain's chances of recovering from their minute mistake because they were still pros who could quickly adjust their state even after such a mental attack, Ye Xiu had to give Dai Yanqi credit where credit was due.

**One Autumn Leaf:** [beats the table and laughs]

**One Autumn Leaf:** Okay, okay, you deserve that one.

**Firebird Messenger:** [withered plant regains life]

**Firebird Messenger:** Yay! One down! Just wait! I'll have more outfits prepared for you!

**One Autumn Leaf:** I'm not so sure if I want to keep up our coaching sessions at this rate.

**Firebird Messenger:** But you promised!

**Firebird Messenger:** Train an innocent little girl who also wants to improve at Glory while writing and drawing to her heart's delight?

Innocent, huh? Ye Xiu's lips upturned at the thought. Would an innocent girl use such a shameless method to throw the opponent team into havoc and cause Weibo to crash and burn down? Everyone on the pro players QQ were still laughing at Blue Rain and specific three victims involved. That it was the king of trash talk that was silenced and thrown off by solid

walls of nonsense only made it funnier. No one disliked such a good revenge story. Especially when it was normally them on the other end of the long solid walls of text in games.

This girl and 'innocent'? Ye Xiu chuckled.

But he did enjoy their times together and he would feel bad if her skills lowered or stayed stagnant because of her determination to finish the Sanxiu series she was writing for him and Mucheng so he typed.

**One Autumn Leaf:** Alright, alright. Next time, I'll use a Blade Master. Think of the ways you can defend against Huang Shaotian. If you had done better against him, the opportunity you made could have been exploited better and the game wouldn't have been won so narrowly.

**Firebird Messenger:** [salutes]

**Firebird Messenger:** Okay! Senior Ye, I understand! I will do my homework!

**One Autumn Leaf:** [pats head]

**One Autumn Leaf:** Good, Little Dai.

**Firebird Messenger:** [happy rolling cat]

**Firebird Messenger:** By the way, I have chapter 42 ready if you want to look before I post.

Ye Xiu was sure that his hand speed was never faster than in his times chatting with Dai Yanqi.

**One Autumn Leaf:** [sparkling eyes autumn tree]

**One Autumn Leaf:** I want!

**One Autumn Leaf:** Thanks for the food, Little Dai~

**Firebird Messenger:** [firebird messenger big thumbs up]

He was also sure that he and Mucheng had never been so grateful that Dai Yanqi was an artist who could draw avatar emoticons and stickers. Autumn Tree with sparkling eyes looked exactly like how they thought Su Muqiu would appear if someone told him that they had rare materials for him. Perfect.

He really loved this junior. She was already becoming his favorite one.

---

For the rest of the season, there were more incidents that made Ye Xiu laugh at how creative Dai Yanqi was getting at causing havoc in team challenges and even more moments where Ye Xiu was impressed by her rapid improvement. Although she didn't win a lot of her individual challenges when up against the more veteran pros, Ye Xiu gave her the point for the good match she played. She was growing. And although her attempts at chaos didn't always succeed and she didn't always do good enough to be called the most crucial member of that team challenge, Ye Xiu sometimes gave her the point just for the good laugh and sometimes for the improvement she was showing in being aware of her team and coordinating with Xiao Shiqin's plans. She really was going to be a good player within a few years.

He didn't like the idea of cosplaying, but he was growing increasingly happy that he got both Su Mucheng and Dai Yanqi included in the deal. He loved watching his juniors grow stronger and focus on the game and watching these two's growths were enough to make him forget about Excellent Era's own team challenges and games.

With the incentive of the deal and also the additional feeling of needing to get better for the sake of being able to mentor her little junior, Su Mucheng was improving by bounds and leaps. Ye Xiu had never saw her so motivated to get stronger before and Su Mucheng was beginning to develop her own personal style. He had never saw their undoubtedly private training sessions together, but he imagined Su Mucheng was getting tougher and more responsible, possibly acting like a military instructor when teaching Dai Yanqi for the sake of their shared goal.

He just wished that he wasn't at the end of that goal shared by two enthusiastic, determined women.

It was really too bad that Sun Xiang was in her year. Otherwise, Ye Xiu thought that Dai Yanqi could be a good contender for Best Newcomer.

He sighed a little in regret.

Well, it was good enough to just be alive to grow. Dai Yanqi still had a lot of time and Ye Xiu was sure that the girl might just make it to All Stars one year.

Actually, if she just shared her online name, then Ye Xiu was sure that she could in this. All Stars was about popularity more than strength and her works were all popular. Even the series pairing him with an 'original male character' was gaining a lot of traction, 'Su Muqiu' getting a lot of fans and fanworks dedicated to him every week. Mucheng delighted in those, loving how her brother was getting the appreciation that he deserved. If Muqiu was alive, Ye Xiu was sure that Muqiu would have enjoyed it too.

Well, summer arrived. It was the first time that Excellent Era didn't make it past quarter finals of playoffs, but Ye Xiu couldn't say that it was unexpected.

His mood was a little low, but he couldn't help but helplessly smile at the QQ message that popped up on his computer.

**Firebird Messenger:** Ye Xiu! Ye Xiu! Want to stay at my place over summer? My parents don't mind and it'd be easier to adjust all the clothes with the sewing machine and fabrics I have here. Those are hard to carry as luggage on flight.

Ye Xiu could just imagine it. Dai Yanqi *would* pack a bunch of cosplay clothes for him, props, and a entire sewing machine to bring to H City if he said that the deal was to be carried out here. She would even prioritize it over her own clothes and living necessities.

He huffed, already opening a new window to find tickets for a flight. Now that their season was already over, he had nothing to do anyways. He also couldn't just renegade on his side of the deal. A promise was a promise, even if he hated the idea of cosplay. The girls had worked hard this season and he was going to honor it.

**One Autumn Leaf:** No need. I'll go to W City and stay at a hotel.

**One Autumn Leaf:** But what are you doing inviting a guy to live at your house? Are you sure your parents wouldn't mind?

**Firebird Messenger:** Of course they won't! In fact, they would be very happy!

**One Autumn Leaf:** What kind of parents would be happy to have a stranger be in the same house as their single daughter?

**Firebird Messenger:** Well, Su Muqiu was happy to have you over despite having Mumu at home too, right?

**One Autumn Leaf:** That was different. Muqiu knew he could beat me up if I harmed Mucheng.

**Firebird Messenger:** Okay! Let me send a picture of you to my dad so that he knows how easy to beat up you are then!

**One Autumn Leaf:** Little Dai...

**Firebird Messenger:** Just kidding :D

**Firebird Messenger:** But stay at my house! No need to worry. My parents would really love you.

**Firebird Messenger:** We also have three computers!

**Firebird Messenger:** A deck of max level account cards! All classes!

**Firebird Messenger:** Free of charge everything!

**Firebird Messenger:** A dog!

**Firebird Messenger:** Homemade food!

**Firebird Messenger:** No travel time necessary to get to places!

**Firebird Messenger:** Stay indoors with AC all day!

**Firebird Messenger:** Instant noodles to snack on whenever you want!

**One Autumn Leaf:** Okay, okay, I'll go.

**Firebird Messenger:** [firebird messenger jump-shouts yay!]

**Firebird Messenger:** I'll tell my parents right now. Don't forget! I'll be waiting for you!

**Firebird Messenger:** I'm really telling them that you're coming over right now!

**Firebird Messenger:** [address]

**Firebird Messenger:** Right now!

**Firebird Messenger:** [zhang xinjie looks up from his watch; bold caption says: it is time]

**One Autumn Leaf:** You...

There was no more response as if she had expected him to have already gone to the airport. Ye Xiu helplessly smiled at his computer screen. This girl was really like a whirlwind, but he couldn't deny the sense of warmth and quiet joy within at how Dai Yanqi had known him so well to persistently hit on all of his weaknesses, possibly even had more things prepared to say to persuade him to stay at her house.

There was someone waiting for him. An open home and a person who wanted him to stay over greatly.

It made him think of that time Su Muqiu had invited him to his house and yet another time when Ye Xiu had offered to leave when things were getting bad and no customers came for days because of the storm and rain. Su Muqiu and Su Mucheng had hugged him and begged him not to go, declaring like the little fools they were that they would rather starve with him, a stranger, than let him go.

He was very weak to these kind of people.

He had stayed then.

He had chose to go today.

The summer before a new season of Glory suddenly didn't seem so long. In fact, it even felt a little short.



---

In fact, it had been very short.

Summer with Dai Yanqi could only feel very fast and too short.

She really was like a windstorm who did whatever she want, but it was undeniably very amusing and fun.

---

Ding dong.

Ye Xiu had only pressed the doorbell once when the door suddenly opened and he was dragged inside. He barely had time to reorient himself when he was pushed in front of two adults who had only blinked their eyes when Dai Yanqi introduced loudly with an excited grin and flourished wave of hands.

"Mom! Dad! This is my future husband!"

Ye Xiu was about to politely introduce himself, remembering his manners when with his elders, when suddenly the introduction registered and he froze.

"He's going to be living with us! Don't forget to make a meal for him tonight too!"

He barely managed to turn his head to Dai Yanqi when the girl tugged him off his feet and dragged him off again. As they left, he also barely managed to catch the exasperation on her parents' faces. Surprisingly or unsurprisingly, they didn't even move out of their positions, seemingly used to their daughter's antics.

Huh.

---

Once they were in her room, unsurprisingly very colorful and messy with countless fabrics, arts and crafts and notebooks strewn everywhere, Dai Yanqi finally let go of his hand and gave him an expectant look. Her wide eyes eagerly awaited his reaction.

Ye Xiu remained silent for a moment longer before he finally said with a helpless feeling, "Okay, I've either told you too many stories about Muqiu or you've hung out with Mucheng for too long. This kind of shamelessness is not my fault."

"Of course not!" Dai Yanqi beamed and said proudly, "It's mine! I also may have been encouraged by the great Su siblings' examples."

"Horrible."

"Well, now you know how my parents and I feel!" Dai Yanqi concluded her precious antics before happily turning on Ye Xiu. "So are you going to reject me or are you not? You're

smiling. It doesn't look like you're going to reject me. Then that means you accept my proposal, right?"

"Horrible." Ye Xiu repeated, but couldn't help but smile. He was trying not to, but the corner of his lips were uncontrollable. It had been ever since he realized what was going on and now it was getting even more uncontrollable because of her dramatic antics and because this was really the first time someone had ever confessed to him and he had never expected that this was how it was going to go.

Dai Yanqi studied his expression in mock seriousness before heading to the other side of her room where there was something covered by a white cloth.

"What does that mean? Are you going to reject me? Hold on! Before you do, I request a trial period! I also would like to remind you that as the sole writer of Sanxiu, I have power over in-novel Su Muqiu's fate. I *will* take him hostage."

"So horrible." Ye Xiu said, turning a little blue from held-back laughter before he finally cracked and burst into laughter, especially as she unveiled the thing in her hands and showed him her example of what that might look like. It was a tiny custom-made Autumn Tree figurine trapped in a bird cage and it looked absolutely ridiculous.

Dai Yanqi grinned as she took it out and gave it to Ye Xiu who was still laughing. Although his hands trembled with his body in mirth, he still held the Autumn Tree figurine gently, observing it with a wonder he hadn't even given any of the One Autumn Leaf figurines. "I won't, but will you think about it? Regardless of whether you accept at the end or not, I just want you to stay here for a while and think about it."

She ducked her head down, finally feeling a little nervous again, but she didn't have to stay in wait for an answer for too long. A hand patted her head, soothing her nerves, and Ye Xiu gave a soft answer.

"Okay. I will think about it." That, Dai Yanqi knew. Ye Xiu had always been serious and responsible when it came to dealing with people's emotions and futures. He wouldn't agree to something like this unless he knew for certain of his feelings and thoughts. Dai Yanqi knew she wouldn't get an immediate answer and didn't mind, but her breath was caught when she lifted her head and saw his gentle, warm eyes so amused and happy and content.

"I will stay and give you an answer when I'm done thinking." Ye Xiu said, but Dai Yanqi couldn't help but think that the answer might not be said too far into the future.

"...okay!" She said happily before grabbing the hand that didn't hold Autumn Tree and pulling him over to the rack of clothes she had. "In the meantime, you still owe me many pictures!"

"Maybe I shouldn't think about it." Ye Xiu backtracked with a drawl, and Dai Yanqi laughed, not bothered at all. Actually, his response only made her steadier and even more bold as she plucked two sets of clothing off the rack.

"Too late~" She sang before asking cheekily, "God Ye! Do you like cats or foxes?"

"I'm still going to wear both in the end, aren't I." He remarked dryly, but in the end, observed the two seriously and pointed to the black, white-tipped fox ears and tail. "Fox."

It came with a plain traditional kimono, something which he preferred immensely over all the belts and chains that came with the more punkish clothes for the cat. He even spotted a collar to go with it and he could already sense that it was going to be a really long day.

Dai Yanqi beamed, "Okay! Let me do your hair and make up too! You don't mind wigs, right?"

"Do I have a choice?"

"No! But I thought it wouldn't hurt to ask."

Ye Xiu held his heart in mock hurt. "It hurts even more to see clearly my lack of a choice."

Dai Yanqi laughed as she brushed Ye Xiu's hair, happy that for all the reluctance he showed, he stayed still like an obedient child or statue. She happily combed his hair, admiring how soft the strands were and even more so, admiring how she was actually touching his hair.

She had been thinking about it a lot this season. She had wrote many descriptions for many of the pro players, even more for Ye Xiu, but today and tomorrow and for who knows how long, she would actually be able to see him up close and touch the hair and face she could only formerly describe. It had been an interesting thought. And Ye Xiu's hair had been interestingly smooth and soft to comb through and fix.

"Okay," She playfully quipped as he had, wanting to play along and help him have as much fun as she was, "then I will let you live in ignorance of how imprisoned I have made you."

"Too late. I've already seen how you bound me by my words." Ye Xiu gestured to his current helplessness in mock lament. "I pity my past self who agreed to a deal, not knowing how terrifying it is to have two women determined to get what they want."

"Teaches you right." Dai Yanqi teased, rapping her comb against Ye Xiu's head, "for underestimating women."

"Never. Did I say that? What I underestimated was a rookie." Ye Xiu paused and Dai Yanqi automatically opened her mouth to retort back and fill the silence, but Ye Xiu tilted his head up and she stopped at the brilliance of his eyes. A golden brown that shone as if they had seen a great wonder.

"By the way, you did well. I never got bored watching you this season; you have worked hard and your results more than show it." He gave a sincere smile with his praise. And Dai Yanqi thought it might have been a dream, everything from the praise to the fact that he was even here in her bedroom, but Ye Xiu continued with a chuckle, "By the way, did Little Xiao think that you were replaced by an alien? Admit it. He was giving you weird looks all season wasn't he."

Yup. This was Ye Xiu. Not a dream. Ye Xiu was handsome one second and then he opened his mouth and you wondered where all the charm went. Dai Yanqi giggled. She still liked him. She loved him very much.

"Of course not! Captain believed in me hehe. Though he *was* bewildered by my sudden growth....."

"That's the difference between Little Xiao and Little Zhang. Had Little Zhang been your captain instead....."

"Oh! Really....."

They continued chatting, easily falling into conversation like the first day they met. Dai Yanqi was quite proud of how comfortable and content she made Ye Xiu even while he was doing one of his most hated activities.

The results for the first day, of course, turned out great. She placed everything on a drive to later give to Su Mucheng who had half-reluctantly gave up the opportunity to watch Ye Xiu cosplay and be her model to go with Chu Yunxiu to Japan for the summer as the two had promised before regular seasons ended. Dai Yanqi was secretly very thankful to Chu Yunxiu. Because of this, she would get to spend a lot of secret alone time with God Ye! It was really the best summer yet and she hoped for many more like this!

Of course, not everything could be secret so she sent some photos as a preview of the external drive she was preparing to her fellow friend and hopefully future sister in law.

---

**Dancing Rain:** [dancing rain cries]

**Dancing Rain:** You both looked like you had so much fun!!!

**Dancing Rain:** I can't wait to see everything!

**Dancing Rain:** Thanks, Little Dai for keeping him company and taking a lot of pictures!

**Firebird Messenger:** No problem, Sis Su! Have fun in Japan with Senior Chu!

**Dancing Rain:** Thanks!

Su Mucheng pouted, but was glad for Ye Xiu. For something he never failed to say that he disliked, he really did look very relaxed in the photos Dai Yanqi took. There was even a sparkle in his eyes that said that he was happy.

It seemed that Dai Yanqi was very good for him.

He wouldn't be alone in his room this summer too.

---

While Dai Yanqi looked through and processed the photos she took for the past hour, Ye Xiu went out to check on the others in the house.

It was going to be a little awkward, but the manners ingrained into him since a child didn't allow him to just ignore the parents and remain in his room in someone else's house.

Venturing out, he found them still in the combined kitchen and dining room area. It was a very spacious place with many decorations, food containers, snacks, and other things as typical of a kitchen and dining room lying around. It was very comfy. He missed this chaos associated with a home setting. His family had always been orderly and neat, but this reminded him of the days he was with Su Muqiu and Su Mucheng in that tiny apartment and he liked it.

The two noticed him and he smiled awkwardly. It had been very long since he felt this way. Normally, he was one with the thick skin, but it seemed that today he had learned humility and shame. Su Mucheng would laugh if she knew the number Dai Yanqi did on him with a single introduction, the other pro players would follow too. But it wasn't so bad.

"Uh, hi. I'm Ye Xiu, Dai Yanqi's friend. It's nice to meet you." He ventured forward as casually as possible, "Thank you for having me over. Do you need help with anything like dinner?"

The two adults shared glances before laughing and giving him warm looks.

"It seems it'll be a pleasure to have you stay over, Little Xiu! We've never had one of our dear Little Yan's friends over. Come here and help me wash the vegetables so that we can talk." She waved him over and he followed, washing his hands first and then helping her with the vegetables placed near the sink. She beamed at his smooth handling of the task and happily said, "I'm very grateful for you being there for her. I know she can be a handful, but it's my first time seeing her this excited and happy over someone. You know, the only times I have seen her this excited and happy over anything is when she's playing Glory or reading her books or doing the things young people seem to do nowadays....."

She continued on, telling him a lot about her daughter, and Ye Xiu smiled as he listened and responded once in a while. A warm, happy, proud little family. They embarrassed each other and spontaneously sprung things on each other, but they bonded and had fun in the chaos they each accepted.

It was nice.

An hour later, Dai Yanqi called for him and found him in the kitchen. She immediately panicked over the new stories her mom was beginning to tell him and the two bickered and Ye Xiu laughed while watching. In the end, Dai Yanqi joined them in the kitchen and her mom happily told him to stay over more often because Dai Yanqi never helps her in the

kitchen and this was the first time. Dai Yanqi blushed and called 'Mom!' again, but Ye Xiu smiled and said that it was fine because he could do the cooking.

Dai Yanqi stared fascinated, looking at his hands that were helping to stir the soup as if just realizing that he was helping her mom cook and just realizing that she was going to eat food that he helped cooked, while her mom was delighted and asked him to go shopping with her the next day and to buy the ingredients he wanted because she wanted to eat his cooking. Ye Xiu was embarrassed, but agreed to go. Of course, Dai Yanqi volunteered for the trip too and her mom loudly told Ye Xiu in delight that he was a good influence and really had to stay over and become her Little Dai's husband in the future. Ye Xiu laughed when it was Dai Yanqi who was the embarrassed one this time. Who was it that introduced him as their future husband hours ago?

---

There had been no set plan when he came over, but Ye Xiu found himself staying over for the entire summer.

Only an hour or two every other day was really spent on cosplay and taking photos. In the beginning, most of the photos taken were of Ye Xiu himself, but Ye Xiu noticed her own cosplay outfits and how some of them matched with the ones she chose for him and offered that they take the photos together. Dai Yanqi's eyes widened before she shouted in glee that she wanted to do it and so they did some cosplaying and modelling sessions together. Towards the end of summer, Dai Yanqi beamed when she got to cosplay as Firebird Messenger with Ye Xiu's One Autumn Leaf. She was going to keep that photo forever!! Print it out, ask Ye Xiu to sign it, and put it on her bedroom wall with everything else.

She was so glad that she got Ye Xiu to agree to cosplay for her and she asked for a renewal of the deal for next season. Ye Xiu was exasperated, but agreed, having admittedly found this time fun. Or really, having found watch her be so serious and happy fun.

He loved watching people play Glory seriously and happily, but seeing people pursue other dreams was also nice. It was a good change and something that helped keep his mind off of the Excellent Era of this season.

He really enjoyed his little junior's passion for the things she loved.

He also enjoyed reading her story and playing Glory with her.

Most of the day was actually spent on this. Ye Xiu happily helped her with the Sanxiu story, contributing stories of his shared past with Muqiu and beta-reading what she wrote. He also helped contribute the battle scenes of many of her Glory fanfiction. Of course, he teased her for not knowing how to come up with battle scenes that she was satisfied with despite being a pro player, but he was more than happy to help her create fake battles between pro teams and describe all the tactics, thought, and inner conflicts within the pro players for each team.

Dai Yanqi was always in awe, especially when all of his battles felt realistic and all that he said would be in the minds of the pro players in the challenges at the time felt like real personal struggles and thoughts that the real pro players would have. How much did God Ye

understand Glory? How much did God Ye understand of his fellow pro players? He seemed so invisible outside the game. Most have never seen him and yet he seemed to know each and every person's strengths, weaknesses, struggles, styles, and thoughts. He could describe what Han Wenqing was thinking in a little moment of hesitation. He could describe his emotion in a charge forward and an Eagle Stamp.

God Ye was really incredible.

And all the tacticians were too, if this was what went in their minds each battle. Dai Yanqi really appreciated her captain now too.

"God Ye..."

"Hm?" Ye Xiu pulled out of his excitement to see that Dai Yanqi look down at her notebook with sadness.

"Do you think we're wasting Captain's time?"

Ye Xiu's eyes widened before he chuckled and shook his head. Dai Yanqi's eyes raised to see his sincere smile. "No! As long as you do your best, I don't think that you're wasting his time!" Dai Yanqi's eyes widened and Ye Xiu said, "Work hard. Listen to your captain and if he's feeling discouraged, encourage him too. Tell him to be bold! As long as you believe it in your being, declare it with your hearts, your team has a chance at championship too!"

Dai Yanqi loved this man.

"Mm! Thunderclap can win the championship!"

"No," Ye Xiu smiled, "Thunderclap *will* win the championship!"

She really did.

"Thunderclap will win the championship!" Dai Yanqi corrected herself with an even bolder shout and she giggled, feeling a renewed energy for Season 8. Thunderclap will win the championship! She felt like she really believed it now. It will happen!

Ye Xiu smiled, "Good. That's the most important lesson for all Glory players to learn, Little Dai. Now you have a step up against many others."

She giggled.

Of course, besides creating and writing battle scenes for Glory fanfiction, they also played Glory together. Dai Yanqi loved that the most. Ye Xiu was always so alive and happy when he played Glory. During that summer, they not only fought in the arena, but they also collected many materials and stole some wild BOSSes.

Dai Yanqi was the one to suggest it. Because not only did she want to play with Ye Xiu, but she also wanted to see the scene he saw with Su Muqiu and Autumn Tree... and she also wanted to see Lord Grim.

Lord Grim wouldn't be added into the Sanxiu series she was currently writing, but she felt that it was so important to both Su Muqiu and Ye Xiu. It was an important card to them and so it was also important to her and she wanted to see it. The umbrella that Su Muqiu had spent so much time researching, that weapon that he wanted to see Ye Xiu use to revolutionize Glory.

When she asked, Ye Xiu hadn't minded so they began to collect material for the umbrella. She was glad that they did, it hadn't been her imagination. The umbrella was important to Ye Xiu and remaking that legendary weapon made his eyes soft with both nostalgia and delight. A very sweet sight. She sketched him a lot in her notebooks these days, enjoying these moments and his natural expressions. Happy expressions, relaxed expressions, determined expressions, mischievous expressions... many faces she never thought to see on the once elusive god.

Ye Xiu saw them one day when she left her sketchbook open. She wanted to take it back, embarrassed, but she stopped when she saw his expression. After a moment of observing the different angles of his face, the different expressions that she watched and sketched, he quietly said,

"You really like me, don't you?"

It was kind of an arrogant thing for someone to say, but Dai Yanqi felt a part of her soften and pour like molten chocolate, "I do."

Ye Xiu was quiet for a while before he admitted, a finger tracing the lines her pencil made as if noting every delicate stroke and detail she made. "I think I like you too."

Dai Yanqi's eyes widened and she threw herself onto him, hugging him from his back, "Really?! You do?! You can't take that back!! God Ye, you really can't!! I heard it and it'll be in my heart forever so you have to take responsibility!! You can't take it back!"

Ye Xiu laughed just as her arms wrapped around his neck and he raised his hands to hold them gently just as he lifted his eyes to look at hers. "Okay. I won't take it back then."

He was so beautiful, better than any portrait or sketch, and so close that she couldn't help it so she darted down a little and stole a kiss, pressing her lips against Ye Xiu's like a butterfly. Ye Xiu's eyes widened a little in surprise, but he didn't embarrass her. Instead of pulling away in surprise, he pressed back and they both opened their mouths, exchanging a slightly deeper kiss.

It lasted for a while longer before Ye Xiu pulled back and patted her on the head. "Be good." He laughed.

Dai Yanqi pouted. She knew that he was a gentleman and a soft lover so she wasn't surprised that this would happen. No, she knew and she loved his gentleness and care, but still she couldn't help but climb into his lap and lean into his face as she sometimes imagined seductive characters to do and say, "What if I don't want to be good? What if I want you to rough me up and ravish me?"



Ye Xiu's eyes crinkled in amusement and he patted her head again, repeating. "Be good." He gave a soft, chaste kiss for good measure and Dai Yanqi felt surprisingly inordinate pleasure and she decided to obey for now. But she still wanted to remain in God Ye's lap now that she was in it so she stayed. Ye Xiu was even more amused, but didn't hint for her to get off.

"Just because you're handsome, I'll let you off." Dai Yanqi teased as she settled on Ye Xiu's lap. His body was warm and his arm gentle when it encircled her waist to ensure she won't fall. A gentleman. She beamed. Noticing her open sketchbook again, she made an excited sound. "Ah! Speaking of drawings, I just recently finished the cover for the second story of the Sanxiu series."

The first story A Summer Ten Years Ago was about Ye Xiu's past with the Su siblings. The three years they spent together, minus Lord Grim.

The second story of the Sanxiu series was going to be where things began to change. Instead of Su Muqiu's death, he was going to be in a coma after the car accident and wake up in Season 5 to Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng's joy. He would recover for a year and join Excellent Era to help Ye Xiu out in Season 6.

The reason why it was a series was because of this. She wanted the first story to be almost completely true with the second story began to be more fanciful, a story to sate Ye Xiu's wish to have seen them together as a dual core at least somewhere. The alternate universes could keep being made after the prequel, but she wanted the prequel to remain unchanged. And if Lord Grim appeared in the pro stage and became known, she had also wanted to add that story to the currently 'completed' first story that was the long prequel to Sanxiu's journey to Glory together in the second story she was beginning to start.

Ye Xiu made a pleased sound as he glanced over her shoulder to see a drawing of him and Su Muqiu in a wheelchair looking up across a dangerous winding road to the gold trophy that had the infamous emblem that appeared after winning a fight: Glory!

He was happy, but when he saw the art-him and Su Muqiu hold hands on the cover, he couldn't help but ask. "Is it really okay to ship your boyfriend with someone else and write about it?"

"Yeah?" Dai Yanqi answered, a bit absent-minded because she saw a place she wanted to fix on the cover. As she made a part of the road more crumbly, she said, "I was planning to write more AllYe, HanYe, and ZhouYe fics anyways."

"..." Ye Xiu was speechless. He knew that Dai Yanqi wrote them, he had seen her archive of works after all, but was this really okay?

Dai Yanqi seemed to sense the silence and she hesitantly looked up at him, eyes a little unconsciously pleading, "Can I?"

"...you're not afraid your man will run off with another man?"

Dai Yanqi laughed as she realized his concern. It was really concern for her thoughts, but Dai Yanqi didn't mind, even wanted to do it. She didn't think she could quit writing fanfiction, or

even quit shipping him with others. She grinned, explaining to him. "Fantasy is just fantasy! Entertainment! Unreal!" Turning back and happily nuzzling into his cheek, she grinned at her slightly perplexed lover and kissed him. "I know that you won't run away with anyone so I'm not worried! And I know that you're all mine so I don't mind writing stories of romantic hypotheticals of things being different! It's ridiculous to be jealous of a fake Captain Han with a fake Ye Xiu when the real Ye Xiu is all mine! Besides, I just love writing stories of people being very deeply cherished and loved and you're my favorite person so I love seeing people love you and know your glory!"

"Huh," Ye Xiu said, still a little bewildered. Dai Yanqi could see him attributing and dismissing it to a trait of young people of the new generation. Her Ye Xiu could be a conservative old soul sometimes. But that he was okay with it made her happy.

Best boyfriend ever! Where else will she find such a boyfriend who was okay with all her hobbies? To think a month ago, her parents had been worried she would find no one who would accept and support her gaming career or love for BL (and yaoi) and cosplay and many other things hehe!

"Alright, then." Ye Xiu said, "I look forward to your next work then."

Look, mom! He even reads my stories! Dai Yanqi giggled and nodded, "You'll like it. Though I might need you to help me with the battle scenes here too."

Ye Xiu chuckled. "Okay. No one has ever seen the coordination of a battle mage and sharpshooter before so I would help you on that anyways."

Dai Yanqi's eyes gleamed as she thought about the amazing battles Ye Xiu could see taking place in his mind. Him and Su Muqiu leading Excellent Era to championship team by team, showing off their coordination, strength, and glory. "I'm sure it'll be amazing. I look forward to it too."

---

Summer ended with an external drive of cosplay photos, lots of stories and art written and drawn, and an entire warehouse filled with materials for the Myriad Manifestations Umbrella. She was almost sure that her parents loved Ye Xiu more than her, her boyfriend having helped her mother cook and do the chores a lot and her father get addicted to Glory with them. The latter matter was unintentional, but Dai Yanqi was happy that there was one more in the family who understood the glory of Glory! Now they just needed to convert her mom!

Anyways, it was a productive summer, the most productive and satisfying summer in her life, and Dai Yanqi was sad to see that their time had to come to an end.

"You have to come next summer." She insisted and Ye Xiu laughed, giving her a hug back.

"Of course. I promised to take responsibility. And we still have a deal, remember?"

"I'm going to make you wear bunny ears next time." She mumbled in his shirt.

"I should really stop training you." Ye Xiu joked.

"You won't." She said petulantly, but released him. "Take care, Ye Xiu."

Ye Xiu's eyes softened. They were always beautiful like that and Dai Yanqi could just stare at them forever. "You too, Little Dai."

And he left.

---

**Dancing Rain:** I got the drive from Ye Xiu!

**Dancing Rain:** I can't believe I missed out on so much! You both looked like you had so much fun! I never thought I would ever see the day when Ye Xiu actually looks genuinely happy in a photo he knows is being taken of him!

**Dancing Rain:** Also read the second story of the series. So much yes yes yes!! Autumn Tree and One Autumn Leaf on the field! How'd you write the battle scenes so well?

**Dancing Rain:** Thanks for everything, Little Dai! I'm really happy you and Ye Xiu got to meet that day at the convention! I thank you for everything you've done for my brothers!

**Dancing Rain:** Also, want to continue our training sessions? I heard that the deal was still continuing and I want to see Ye Xiu cosplay in person too!

**Firebird Messenger:** Aaaaaaa, I'm so glad you enjoyed everything! It was great! I had a lot of fun with Ye Xiu this summer and the trick is to keep joking with him during the photoshoot! And hehe, Ye Xiu came up with the battles! He's so good! I love our training sessions together, though I love yours too and yes, yes, yes! I would love to continue training with you Sis Su! Thank you so much! And it's me that's grateful for that day at the convention and being able to know your brothers. They are so wonderful. You're really lucky to have them as brothers!

**Dancing Rain:** Hehe, thanks!

**Firebird Messenger:** Let's continue to work hard for Glory!

**Dancing Rain:** Definitely! Yes!

---

At the time Season 8 began and Dai Yanqi texted Su Mucheng to work hard together for Glory and for the sake of getting Ye Xiu to cosplay again, she had no way of expecting one of the most shocking things to happen in the entirety of Glory history.

It was Season 8 that marked the fall of Excellent Era and a great god's retirement.

## Season 8

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

To be honest, Dai Yanqi hadn't noticed in the beginning. She got stronger, she talked a lot with Su Mucheng and Ye Xiu, and she learned a lot about Glory and tactics over summer when Ye Xiu had explained so many matches both real and imaginary to her... But she hadn't noticed anything about her friends.

She had been too focused on the Sanxiu story. Too focused on making cosplay, art, and other stories. Too focused on her personal growth and coming up with ways to win against her opponents or at least do well enough to catch a Battle God's eye and gain points for their cosplay deal. Too rightfully focused on the team that she hadn't noticed that something was wrong with her friends'.

There was something very wrong with Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng's Excellent Era. Maybe before, when she had been an ignorant rookie who had yet to gain experience, truly understand teamwork and skill levels, and had yet to hear God Ye's explanations, she would have missed it like so many apparently had... but she wasn't that person anymore. She had trained harder nowadays, had paid attention to Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, and her captain's teachings, had understood tactics and other pro players a lot more... She was a lot better than the Dai Yanqi of the beginning of Season 7 and so she knew. One look at Excellent Era and then many hurried horrified looks at the previous games and she knew.

There was really something *very wrong* about Excellent Era. The team was doing bad on purpose. Not trying their best in the individual and group challenges. Isolating the best partners in the team challenge and failing to carry out Ye Xiu's simplest orders (how long has this been going on that Ye Xiu had to resort to simple orders when he had the biggest brain to give more complicated maneuvers, but now couldn't even trust his own team with *simple orders*?). In the press conferences, all the blame is given to Ye Xiu by his teammates.

How could no one see this?

The layman's eye and even rookie's eye could only see the front of the door. Even most pro players could only enter in the doorway. Only a few could actually tell what is going on in the room.

Everyone was talking about God Ye's decline and even on the Season 7 rookies chat she was in, people thought it was God Ye's performance that was declining and were mocking him.

It was as if his beautiful glory and tactics were regarded as nothing.

Dai Yanqi was indignant.

How did she not notice earlier?

**Firebird Messenger:** Ye Xiu, what's going on?

**One Autumn Leaf:** Ah, you noticed?

As expected of Ye Xiu, he could easily figure out what she was referring to by her tone, but Dai Yanqi was hurt by the unintentional barb within his words. He hadn't expected her to notice.

**Firebird Messenger:** Yes, I did. So tell me what's going on.

Her curt words must have made Ye Xiu realize something was wrong because he immediately corrected his previous reply.

**One Autumn Leaf:** I didn't mean to make you feel ignorant. I know you were busy with many other things and your own team like everyone else. I hadn't expected anyone but the master tacticians to notice, really.

Dai Yanqi eased a little. She wasn't a horrible girlfriend to Ye Xiu then. Still, she felt guilty that she didn't know.

**One Autumn Leaf:** It's fine. Just some team problems... It should be over soon. Don't worry about mine. Just focus on your own team.

Dai Yanqi frowned. How could she not worry? His team was wasting his efforts and smearing his name. But she heard the reluctance in Ye Xiu's voice to explain it and relented.

**Firebird Messenger:** Okay. Take care, okay?

**One Autumn Leaf:** Yeah. Thanks. You too, Little Dai.

When she got back to training the next day, her eyes saddened when she felt the warm atmosphere of her team, saw the smiles of her teammates as they greeted her, felt their peace and harmony as they listened to their captain. What was God Ye's training room like? Would he really be okay?

Some of the sadness leaked into the Sanxiu story, but Ye Xiu didn't make any comments when the story Team Excellent Era with the exception of him and Mucheng turned into a more disharmonious team as he beta-read the new chapters.

She wanted him to comment.

Some of her story fans commented that Team Excellent Era wasn't like that, but she ignored them, wanting to hear another person's response.

---

He never did and Dai Yanqi tuned out all news of Team Excellent Era's performance declines, not wanting to hear them because of how it would make her heart ache and distract her from the game.

But she couldn't stop thinking about it. Him. How the team he loved and done so much for was betraying him. How he probably didn't have anyone besides Mucheng at his side to laugh with. No other person paying attention to his emotions like captain did for her, no one handing him chocolate when he was down like the vice captain, no one talking to him about normal things and playing Glory outside of the assigned tasks of the day like her teammates. How his fans who didn't understand were writing many things out of confusion and growing resentment from the losses and beginning to turn.

He was such a good person. Why was this happening to him?

And then the next time she heard news about him, it was a cold winter.

She hadn't been paying attention to the news, not wanting to hear anything about Excellent Era, but the bowls around her clattered and she looked to see her teammates' shocked faces. Then, when she lifted her head to the TV in the cafeteria, she saw it.

Ye Qiu had retired.

Dai Yanqi stood up, ignoring her tray of food. "Captain! I'm going to take a day off! I promise I'll come back for training tomorrow!"

"Huh?" Xiao Shiqin asked, his voice still dazed from hearing news of Ye Qiu's retirement. None of her other teammates even heard her, their eyes just stuck on the TV where the club was still saying their regrets for their captain's leave.

Seeing it made her eyes ache more. She told her captain, "I have to go, but I promise I will be back."

She left, hearing her vice captain tell her captain that she was a big Ye Qiu fan so the news must have hit her hard. She didn't think anyone would *not* be affected by the news, but Dai

Yanqi laughed inside because she was a lot more than a Ye Qiu fan and she needed to go.

**Firebird Messenger:** I'm going to H City. Where are you?

Dai Yanqi was glad that Ye Xiu didn't refuse or tell her to focus on the team again.

**One Autumn Leaf:** Happy Internet Café [address]

**[One Autumn Leaf changed their name to Lord Grim.]**

**Lord Grim:** I'm really fine so take your time and be safe.

She wanted to write that she wouldn't out of spite, but she couldn't do that to him, he already experienced a loss caused by an impatient person and an accident that happened on the way of his travel, so she wrote

**Firebird Messenger:** Okay. Wait for me.

**Lord Grim:** Yeah

It hurt to see the empty profile picture so she also sent him a small animated drawing of Lord Grim she had drawn a long time ago. It was a chibi Lord Grim opening his eyes in a dusty cave, surprising a little yellow bird that had thought he was a statue and taken roost on his head. She loved Lord Grim and it wasn't a bad surprise to see his name being used, but it still ached to see One Autumn Leaf's name go.

Ye Xiu...

---

"You really didn't have to come." Ye Xiu said when she arrived, a helpless but fond expression on his face.

"I wanted to." She said, taking in his condition, somehow still alright, before hugging him. She felt his arms wrap around her too, his head resting against hers. He smelled like cigarettes, but less so. Her mother had encouraged him to quit over summer and it seemed like he really had been reducing his intake little by little though she imagined the recent



events made him itching for more. She squeezed him, burying her nose into his chest. "I wanted to." She repeated.

"Thanks." Ye Xiu said as he squeezed her back too.

---

They headed up to the room. Dai Yanqi's eyes hurt at the small width and length, the dusty furnishing of the storage room. Ye Xiu would be satisfied with it, she knew he could live anywhere as long as he had access to a computer, but it shouldn't have to be this way for him.

She announced, "I'm writing evil Excellent Era fics and you can't stop me."

Ye Xiu's eyes crinkled, but he said, patting her on the head. "They're not that bad."

"Then explain this!"

"The team does poorly. The captain takes responsibility." Dai Yanqi had so many things to say to that, but Ye Xiu's voice dropped. "They'll... do better now that I'm gone."

Her heart hurt. She remembered that time when she had first heard Ye Xiu talk about Su Muqiu. The light in his eyes as he expounded on his friend, the small 'It should have been me instead of him' in his voice when he talked about the hypotheticals. The implied 'If he was here, if it was him who was captain of Excellent Era, he would have done a better job, people would have been happier, the team wouldn't fall apart'- Ye Xiu thought that, but it wasn't true. It wasn't true at all.

"Oh... Why are you crying?" She heard Ye Xiu ask, his voice becoming distressed, even more helpless. She felt his fingers card through her hair as he pulled her into a hug, trying to comfort her, "It's really okay-" He tried to say, but she shook her head, hugging him back and crying into his chest.

"It's not." She said, her tears smearing on his shirt as she shook her head. "You shouldn't be treated like this. You don't deserve this. I don't care what you think you did, they don't deserve you. Whatever it is they think they'll get by doing this to you, they won't get it. They won't ever get better."

She felt Ye Xiu's hands stiffen. She knew that this was a hard word for Ye Xiu who still wanted the best for Excellent Era *even now*, but she still wanted to say it.

"Even Su Muqiu wouldn't be able to save them. They gave up the best, their only hope for glory." The best person in the world. The one who cared and did so much. No one could replace him. No one could replace his glory. Not even Su Muqiu who Ye Xiu always talked fondly about and said would have been better- No, not even him. Dai Yanqi was sure that no one could have outshined Ye Xiu.

He was the peak of Glory. And when he left, everyone felt an absence and loss. Even captain of another team, even the pro players who were opponents, even the fans that didn't like him.

This person who was so high and so bright and so strong. How could Excellent Era think of giving him up? How could they think they could do better? How did they not think things would get worse, not only for them, but for everyone who loved this man and his presence in Glory?

She didn't think she was exaggerating at all. She wrote AllYe for a reason. Even now, had she not turned off the notifications on QQ, her phone would be exploding because of the people demanding answers from Ye Qiu.

"Su Muqiu wouldn't have done better." She repeated, still remembering the unspoken, maybe even unconscious sentiments and thoughts within Ye Xiu's head. "I don't care the reason, it was never your fault." She cried, hating that he even blamed himself for being *kicked* out of the team he had helped make and supported all these years. They even forced him out in the dead of winter with no way back until at least the next, maybe even *next* next year. "Never. They're the horrible ones who brought this upon themselves. Unsalvageable. None of them are ever getting any redemption fics from me."

At that, Ye Xiu finally made a response, a soft huff, "Did you have to say that?" He asked softly, a quiet amusement seeping in his being at her mentioning fanfiction even now. It made everything feel less emotional, took his mind a little off from the pain and things of the past years, and quietly brought him back to the present away from his thoughts and the lingering remnants of the past.

"I see." He quietly spoke, thinking of Su Muqiu, of Excellent Era, of the things she said. He didn't know what to make of all the feelings inside of him brought about by her words, but he murmured, "Thank you."

Dai Yanqi's arms tightened around him and he closed his eyes as he did too, feeling her indignations, comfort, and warmth, her many feelings for him against the things that had happened.

He didn't think he was ever really hurt by what happened, but her presence felt like it was soothing and healing him.

"Thank you, Little Dai." He quietly repeated, thanking her for being there and giving her support.

"Mm," She said, pressing against him as if wanting to fuse and fill every crevice and crack she could find in his soul.

---

"So what are you doing here? What are you doing now?"

There wasn't really a way for him to lie to his girlfriend about his finances and plans. He already promised to take responsibility for accepting her confession and he wasn't the kind of person to back out of that kind of serious consideration and decision or break that kind of serious promise. So Ye Xiu, although a little embarrassed, told her honestly about his previous salary, his name ID problem and background, and how he was planning to rest a

year while working at the Internet café and playing with Lord Grim and then maybe, definitely find a way back.

Dai Yanqi looked as if the night sky had showered a thousand meteors and shooting stars and the world blew up and yet at the same time all of her wishes came true.

Surprisingly, the first thing she commented on was "You have a twin?!"

"Um, yes." Ye Xiu said, not understanding why that was the first thing that came out of her mouth. But then the next question appeared and he understood. How could he not when he had been with this girl for almost a year?

"How close are you with your twin?!"

"You are not pairing me with my little brother."

"Awww," Dai Yanqi pouted, but obeyed. She still looked up expectantly and Ye Xiu sighed.

"We used to share everything and sleep together until the year I ran away from home."

This time, Dai Yanqi's awww was the one which girls used for cute things that they saw. Her eyes still sparkled a little and Ye Xiu resigned himself to a few fanfictions about him and his 'oc twin' appearing in the future.

Ye Xiu sighed, but it was more fond. And happy that she didn't seem to have that much of a problem with the secrets that came out or the instability of his current foreseen future. He would return to the family business after studying for the year after retirement in the future so his finances then wouldn't matter, but right now, he wasn't exactly the ideal boyfriend type and he was well aware of it.

"I'm writing so many evil Excellent Era fics." Dai Yanqi said and Ye Xiu gave her an exasperated look for it. Before he could say anything though, she held up her hand. "No. You are not allowed to defend them. I don't care if you used the wrong ID or refused to appear - they knew that you wouldn't appear from the start! It was in the contract! They shouldn't hold grudges for something they knew you wouldn't do! That's like buying a horse to ride and expecting it to also play dead and do other dog tricks - who does that! And there's many other ways to market you besides advertisements! Why do they think your fanworks sell out more than any other in fan conventions? You don't even need to appear to be valuable! And there's countless other idols on the Internet who don't appear and are popular too! They're the stupid ones for not being able to figure out and offer other options besides the one you already refused to do."

She added furiously, "You're the only reason why they have any value in the first place. Without your three championships, where is Excellent Era? Idiots!"

"It was the team's effort." Ye Xiu reminded, but smiled, understanding and feeling warm by her defense.

"Still." She said, undeterred from her point. Ye Xiu laughed and she smiled at it, happy that he was still happy despite a season and half of struggles and being forced to retire. "You're coming back?"

Ye Xiu was quiet for a while before he nodded. "Yeah. That's the plan." He wasn't quite sure how. He hadn't really thought of it, wanting to take his time to reflect on things and take it easy in the meantime, but he knew he still wanted to go back.

"Want to come to Thunderclap with me?"

Ye Xiu smiled in amusement, "Will they welcome me?"

"Yes." Dai Yanqi said unhesitatingly. It might be awkward with two master tactician shotcallers, but Dai Yanqi knew for a fact that her captain liked Ye Xiu and would love a companion to discuss tactics with *and* a strong player he could rely on and use. Her other teammates were all Ye Xiu's fans as well, not as big as she was, but they would love to have him, especially to have his strength on their side. Thunderclap had no ace players and they all worried about being a burden to their captain. If Ye Xiu joined, she was sure that they would all even cry in thanks to the heavens for bringing such a god into their team to help their burdened captain and give them a greater chance to championship.

Not to mention, as someone who had experienced Ye Xiu's training and coaching matches, she knew that the others would love to be fellow disciples once they found out that her rapid growth was mainly due to Ye Xiu. Even before that because Ye Xiu was such a god. But the team would more than welcome him, especially because Ye Xiu was good at teaching people Glory. Team Excellent Era were really idiots if they couldn't understand that. Dai Yanqi mentally huffed at Ye Xiu's former teammates. They really could have gotten to much higher levels if they listened to their captain. But now they gave up the chance.

There was also that Ye Xiu was someone extremely good at getting rare materials and stealing wild BOSSes. Thunderclap needed a lot of help there, and the club always asked the team to stay over summer to help the guild if they could. (While everyone else elected to stay this summer, Dai Yanqi guiltily chose to stay home with Ye Xiu though. But hey! If she brought Ye Xiu over, then it would make up for more than her summer's worth of effort though, right?)

Ye Xiu was amused and he said, "I'll think about it."

Dai Yanqi knew that he wanted some more time to reorganize his thoughts and decide on a path so she didn't push him. Ye Xiu was someone who always carefully thought of the future and of decisions that could affect others.

"You know my address." Dai Yanqi said, "If you don't want to work here, my mom loves you and wouldn't mind supporting you her whole life. There's also still three computers and a deck of account cards. Maybe more because you got my dad addicted to Glory."

Ye Xiu laughed. "That would be too inconsiderate of me. I'll find a job. In the future, I'll work for my parents and inherit the business."

Dai Yanqi couldn't help but feel a little excited about that. She had never considered writing a fanfiction about CEO or hidden rich kid Ye Xiu, but now that she knew this secret hidden background- hehehe, the stories were writing themselves.

"Then if you don't want to work here and don't want to be a NEET at my place, know that our club would be happy to hire you as a guild worker too."

Ye Xiu, who knew every pro player and team's weakness, quirked his lips up. "I bet. Thunderclap does need to improve their guild to gather material for better silver equipment development and research."

"So come!" Dai Yanqi said, getting more excited at the thought. She tugged Ye Xiu's hand. "When Su Mucheng's contract ends, we have space for her too. And besides, we're a couple. If it ever gets out, what will they think of our matches together if you're on a separate team?"

Ye Xiu arched a brow and quipped, "Isn't it worse to be on the same team though? If it gets out and we're on the same team, what would they think of me?" He sighed theatrically, "I would be a scumbag who abuses my fame and position to get girls."

Dai Yanqi's own lips quirked upwards and she shook her head, reaching to grab Ye Xiu's arm gently. "No, no, no, the narrative that the reporters would write is Dai Yanqi, the vile temptress who seduced an innocent god to be her team's slave." Her fingers caressed Ye Xiu's arm as if she was seducing him at the moment, and Ye Xiu chuckled as he held them, stopping her naughty fingers against the warmth of his skin. They looked at each other in the eyes, playful amusement radiating from them both.

"Then isn't that even more reason to not join your team? My lady, you are not a temptress and I wish to protect your name."

Dai Yanqi giggled as Ye Xiu brought her hand to his lips and kissed her knuckles reverently like a noble knight. But she lifted her hand from his and brought it down to his collar, tugging it so that some of his skin shown. Her fingers traveled lower to rest on his chest and she whispered, "But my lord, you think too highly of me and if you run away from my reach, I am not above using less honorable methods to keep you at my side. Even if the world thinks I am despicable, as long as you are mine, they do not matter in my eyes."

The corners of Ye Xiu's lips turned up, but he patted her head, "But I don't want anyone to say bad things about you so no public reveal until you make your own name or retire from Glory."

"Okay." Dai Yanqi agreed. To be honest, when she first pursued Ye Xiu, she always thought that there would no chance for a reveal at all since he was a private person who was also known for not appearing. That he would allow it at all was a pleasant surprise and she found herself smiling into his shirt. Really... God Ye understood the principle of mutuality and compromise. Why had Excellent Era been so difficult to him?

"One of us already done something bad and is already going to cause a scandal so let's not add more." Ye Xiu added and Dai Yanqi understood with widened eyes.

"Are you going to correct your name?"

"Yeah. It's not fair to you, otherwise." Ye Xiu admitted. Leaving the wrong ID problem be was semi-okay if he was alone, but since they were together, there was a chance it could blow up in the future and affect them both in the future. He didn't want that.

Dai Yanqi giggled, knowing that he was thinking of her again, but worried a little. "Will it be okay?"

"It was bad of me to do it." Ye Xiu admitted, but then smirked. "But both the Alliance and Excellent Era have a lot to lose if they don't help me keep the matter a secret so taking care of it and pretending that Ye Qiu was just a pen name should be a smooth matter. After all, exposing it would be invalidating three of seven championships." And not only the Alliance's administration would be called into question, but Excellent Era would lose its reputation and value as a former championship team.

Dai Yanqi clapped. She liked these kind of problems and solutions in stories. It was too bad she couldn't write it.

Ye Xiu huffed at the exaggerated clap, but said. "Give me three weeks to think about it."

They were back to the original topic. Dai Yanqi smiled, "Okay. But even if you don't join Thunderclap, I'm going to make you wear our colors eventually."

At the cosplay session at the end of the season, Ye Xiu was sure, but he actually didn't mind that. Wearing another team's uniform was immensely preferable to wearing animal ears. Of course, he had no doubt that he would be finding himself wearing both.

He had no doubt that Dai Yanqi would become one of the best players of her generation.

---

Thunderclap didn't have strong members and relied on maps, tactics, and team coordination to win games so Dai Yanqi couldn't stay long. She knew Ye Xiu would have wanted her to stay with her team to begin with, but she knew she wouldn't be able to rest until she saw him and made sure that he was really okay in person so she took a day's leave and came. She was glad she did. And she was really happy that he really was okay.

They stayed together in the storage room for a long while, talking about her team and the past matches, Lord Grim and the tenth server, the Internet café and its people, her parents and her stories... Many things until it was time to see her off.

"Even though I'll give you three weeks to give me an answer, you still have to message me once in a while." Dai Yanqi mumbled in their last hug before she called a taxi to go to the airport.

"Okay." Ye Xiu agreed. "Didn't I already promise weekly coaching sessions with you?"

"Ah! Yes! We have to continue that! I don't care if you retired, we have to continue always!"

Ye Xiu chuckled. "Okay."

"You still have your account cards, right?" Dai Yanqi asked, having saw nothing in the storage room except the coat he just placed on now. Her brows furrowed. She knew that Su Mucheng would keep the rest of Ye Xiu's little possessions with her and that Ye Xiu wasn't a material person to buy so many things, but it was still distressing that he only walked out of Excellent Era with a coat on his back. The god of Glory, Han Wenqing made millions, but after many years and accolades, Ye Xiu walked out with nothing.

Ye Xiu poked the furrow in her brows and smiled assuringly, "Don't think so much, Little Dai. And yes, I do. I carry all the cards I use for our sessions in my pocket."

Dai Yanqi's cheeks dusted. In a sense, that meant that the accounts he used with her were as important to him as Lord Grim. He carried them with him all the time.

"You're the best." She mumbled and pressed closer against him in their hug. They remained like that for a while and then he watched until she got into the taxi, making sure she was safe until she went.

---

"Is it that weird that I have a girlfriend?" Ye Xiu asked in amusement to Chen Guo who had held in her gossip since the moment she saw a bundled up person run into the Internet café and hug this bum next to her. She had been completely covered up with scarves and thick clothes from head to toe, almost literally not a single part of her exposed to sight or the cold air, but judging by the muffled voice, Chen Guo was sure that she was a girl. A girl that Ye Xiu hugged and brought upstairs to his room.

At that time, Chen Guo had been so shocked that she couldn't even utter a reply.

She still was.

"Yes!" She shouted, incredulous that this aggravating, Internet-addicted, seemingly homeless guy had a girlfriend. Much more, a very loving girlfriend.

"Gamers can have girlfriends too." Ye Xiu said sagely. "Just look at Fang Minghua."

"He's the only married person in the entire Alliance!"

"If we take the Alliance as the representative of all Glory players: 1 out of 200. That's not bad odds."

"And you think you can be the lucky 0.5%?!"

"Aren't I?" Ye Xiu said guilelessly and Chen Guo wanted to smack this guy. What kind of girl would think he was good? That someone like him could get a girlfriend even made Chen Guo feel shame that she hadn't found someone yet. "I've always been the best at beating the odds." So shameless.

"Get to work."

Ye Xiu chuckled and went to the front desk. They talked a lot so the night shift would start not so long from now.

---

Dai Yanqi happily accepted a bar of chocolate from her vice captain when she came back to Thunderclap. She actually wasn't that depressed anymore, but Fang Xuecai always had the best chocolate.

"I'm sure God Ye is doing alright." He tried to comfort her.

"I know!" She giggled to his surprise. "God Ye is the best so he has to be alright!"

Fang Xuecai gave an expression like he didn't understand, but he smiled because this was the happiest he saw Dai Yanqi this season and he was glad. They were all worried for her, but it seemed like whatever bothered her these past weeks was finally solved.

"Yeah." He said as their other worried teammates happily welcomed her back.

---

Ye Xiu didn't want to open his private QQ messages because then the others would know that he saw them through the read receipts and bother him even more, but he easily listed the numbers of unread messages he got from each person who tried asking him about his retirement to Dai Yanqi who had asked him about it.

He had no doubt that the numbers would be used as reference for her AllYe fanfiction.

Ah, to be the boyfriend of a fanfic writer.

---

**Firebird Messenger:** I got a tenth server account!

**Lord Grim:** Aren't you busy with training and your other hobbies?

**Firebird Messenger:** Of course, so I'll be giving it to someone to level for me! I just wanted one just in case you need me for running dungeons~

**Lord Grim:** [one autumn leaf is touched]

**Firebird Messenger:** Hm. I loved it before, but now it's kind of weird because you aren't him anymore. Of course, you're always the real OAL to me and I will keep writing fanfiction where you get to keep him and draw you wearing his equipment, but thinking of Sun Xiang making this face...

**Lord Grim:** Hm. You're right.



**[Lord Grim has withdrawn a message.]**

**Lord Grim:** [autumn tree is touched]

**Lord Grim:** Better?

**Firebird Messenger:** Yeah!

**Firebird Messenger:** Wait one week! I'll draw more Lord Grim emoticons for you to use!

**Lord Grim:** Don't forget about training, Little Dai. [ye xiu is helpless]

**Firebird Messenger:** I won't! And awww, you used the Ye Xiu expression pack I gave you. You never use them.

They both knew that it was because Ye Xiu was embarrassed that there was even such an emoticon pack. And that Dai Yanqi had noted and sketched each one of his expressions with such care and detail. And there was also the fond memory of how it had been these sketches made with such loving detail that he had saw in her sketchbook that caused them to truly get together.

Ye Xiu downloaded and saved them because Dai Yanqi had given them to him, but he couldn't help but feel too embarrassed to use them. He wasn't that shameless or thick-skinned.

Dai Yanqi didn't mind. Rather, she was endlessly proud to get this reaction from Ye Xiu. And she was happy now to see him finally use one!

Though they also both knew why. Ye Xiu actually really liked stickers and emoticons, but currently there was no appropriate emoticon to use except that one in his arsenal. Because he couldn't use the One Autumn Leaf emoticons anymore with Sun Xiang being the current owner and now the person they associated the battle mage to.

**Lord Grim:** [autumn tree looks at his failed umbrella attempt in defeat]

**Firebird Messenger:** I should postpone drawing the Lord Grim emoticons.

**Lord Grim:** [autumn tree is horrified!]

**Firebird Messenger:** Hahaha, you're so cute. Okay, I'll draw them.

**Lord Grim:** [autumn tree jump-shouts yay!]

**Firebird Messenger:** [dai yanqi pats head of happy kneeling ye xiu]

Of course, Dai Yanqi had no qualms about using emoticons with Ye Xiu in them though.

And Ye Xiu didn't mind. He actually liked them. There was always a tugging sensation in his heart that even pulled on his lips to smile.

**Firebird Messenger:** By the way, did you tell the Alliance and EE about your name yet?

**Lord Grim:** Hm? Yeah! The day after you left actually. All fixed now!

**Firebird Messenger:** Really? I didn't see any news of it.

**Lord Grim:** Well, there's not really a point to mentioning it now. That's why it was so easy too.

Dai Yanqi felt a little annoyed as she understood the words. Both Excellent Era and the Alliance thought that it didn't matter if his name changed because they didn't think that Ye Xiu would return to play Glory. How did a name change matter when the person in question was already irrelevant?

That Ye Xiu was considered irrelevant to *Glory* really annoyed her. Especially because Excellent Era thought that and of course they did because they did that to Ye Xiu and wanted him to become irrelevant. But considering him irrelevant when not even two days passed since the announcement of his retirement. A god of Glory! The three time championship winner, three time MVP, etc. The one who was the goal of so many people and pro players and beloved by so many fans!

Dai Yanqi was really going to write that Excellent Era hate fanfiction and no one was going to stop her, not even Ye Xiu.

But after drawing the Lord Grim expression pack because she wanted to spoil him even more than she wanted to set the current Excellent Era on fire.

**Firebird Messenger:** Then I can prepare for the day when I need to change your name to Ye Xiu! Hehe, I'll upload the updated fanfictions the day your real name appears and everyone will wonder how I changed all the Ye Qius in my stories so fast.

**Lord Grim:** Ah. If it's just that, let me do it. You have a lot of stories with me in them. It'll take a long time for you to change everything. You focus on your new stories and leave the menial labor to me.

Yes, Dai Yanqi wanted to spoil this man so much. Not only accepted this side of her and even praised her writing, but he also was so always willing to help with beta-reading or offering

insight and his Glory knowledge and general help with anything he could. Never mind that he was the reason why she even had to change all the Ye Qius to begin with, (not really because they were going with the pen name story so Ye Qiu would also be perfectly fine), Dai Yanqi was moved.

**Firebird Messenger:** [firebird messenger is touched]

**Lord Grim:** [ye xiu pats head of happy kneeling dai yanqi]

**Firebird Messenger:** [ye xiu and dai yanqi hugs]

She was not embarrassed to use her favorite emoticon ever.

---

**Dancing Rain:** Ah! Your new profile picture is so cute! It's even animated!

**Dancing Rain:** I like it! Lord Grim finally awakens out of his seclusion cave!

**Lord Grim:** Hehe

**Dancing Rain:** Little Dai made it for you really fast. You two really are so close. Top 10 most surprising friendships in the Alliance!

Ye Xiu blinked as he realized. Oh. Mucheng doesn't know that they were a couple yet. It had happened and felt so natural that he had forgot to tell her this too.

He thought about it and then decided not to say anything yet. She was going to get mad at him for having taken so long to tell her anyways. No harm in a few more weeks, right?

**Lord Grim:** Who's number one?

**Dancing Rain:** Just an expression! But if I have to think on it, I think it's Yang Cong and Wang Jiexi's friendship! I saw them talk about real estate investing last All Stars and it was pretty cute.

**Lord Grim:** So this is how rare pairs form.

Su Mucheng had no qualms about admitting it to him. She immediately typed a happy

**Dancing Rain:** Yup!

Ye Xiu huffed. His lips quirked into a smile. These girls around him...

**Lord Grim:** How's your training with Little Dai?

**Dancing Rain:** Hm? It's going really well. Little Dai is a quick learner! And it's really fun playing with her Elementalist. Xiuxiu and Little Dai are the same class, but their habits and decisions are so different, it's really entertaining!

**Lord Grim:** What do you think about playing together? You two versus me?

**Dancing Rain:** Arrogant. Just wait, brother! We'll blow you up! What time do you and Little Dai normally play together? I'll join!

Ye Xiu smiled and typed the time.

The night after the three played together, Ye Xiu's smile grew even more. After lots of tactics and even guerilla warfare against these two, Ye Xiu won. The third time, he just very barely won.

They could coordinate together very well after more than a year of private training sessions and sparring together to level up Dai Yanqi so that they could make him cosplay. It was impressive. He thought about Dai Yanqi's offer again and he thought, maybe, it could work.

For now, he ended the session and continued to level Lord Grim. Mucheng joined him with a new Cleansing Mist and she teased him for running away before they could get revenge on the fourth match. It had really been because such high intensity matches against two pro players at the same time took a lot out of him and he needed to rest his fingers, but he indulged her and said yes, he needed to make a tactical retreat because they were very strong. Mucheng giggled, pleased. She must have told Little Dai because Dai Yanqi also sent him a very happy expression in the QQ.

Although he was a bit alarmed at first about these two getting along because of last year's team challenge incidents that were no doubt more than half planned by Su Mucheng who also wanted to see him in cosplay (and were continuing this year as well), he was quite pleased by their friendship getting closer now.

Good, good.

He's almost decided now.

---

The weeks passed by quickly, but Ye Xiu was glad that he didn't give an answer straight away, but had waited until he was completely sure of the path he wanted to take.

This was because he potentially had some possible trainees to bring to Thunderclap now that he decided to go. He also cut down on a lot of Guild Thunderclap costs by using of a lot of the tenth server guilds. Ye Xiu was actually considering on keeping Lord Grim guild-less so that he could continue selling his services to the guilds.

Either way, he set on his course.

After prodding Su Mucheng for her thoughts on Dai Yanqi's team and W City, he finally introduced his thoughts to her and she happily pounced on it, telling him to do it and she wanted to follow too. Ye Xiu smiled happily and nodded.

**Lord Grim:** Little Dai, I thought about it.

**Firebird Messenger:** !!!

The answer came really fast. Ye Xiu shook his head in amusement. He was sure that this girl had been waiting for it for a long time. He didn't keep her waiting much longer.

**Lord Grim:** I'll go if you'll have me.

**Firebird Messenger:** Yes, yes, yes!!! I'll go ask right now! Wait one moment! I'm going to ask captain and manager right now!

Ye Xiu hadn't expected Dai Yanqi to ask these very important people that should by all means know a long time ago especially before offering such a thing to him or even after the offer. After all, Dai Yanqi was still a rookie without much credibility or clout. Not to mention, he himself wasn't sure of what he wanted to do so it wasn't good to bring it up to the team or higherups and waste their time or raise their expectations only for him to later think and decide differently.

But he also didn't really think that they would turn him down so he hadn't minded. If it was a bigger team with lots of good young trainees in their camp, it was a different story. But Thunderclap lacked a lot of resources and he was a god level player who came in cheap.

**Firebird Messenger:** Captain said he'd like to talk to you!

**Lord Grim:** Okay. Give him this number. [Happy Internet café phone number]

**Firebird Messenger:** [firebird messenger gives a thumbs up]

Beep...

Ye Xiu picked up the call after the first ring.

"...Ye Qiu?"

Ye Xiu laughed at how dazed the Thunderclap captain sounded. He sounded like he felt like he was in a dream and his glasses were falling off, but he didn't care, too lost in the dream.

"Ah, did she not tell you my current name? It's Ye Xiu now."

"No, *she did*." Xiao Shiqin said, still stunned by how Ye Qiu was a pen name. By how Dai Yanqi knew. By how Dai Yanqi even knew Ye Qiu (or Xiu now) enough to ask him to join Thunderclap and even get him to accept. How did they even know each other? Since when? In hindsight, this made her explosive growth make a lot more sense. But since when?

There were a million questions in Xiao Shiqin's head. He barely managed to keep him on track with the most stunning one. "*You're willing to come to Thunderclap?*"

"Yeah!" Ye Xiu easily, even happily said. "How about it? Buy a god for cheap! He can help your guild, train your team, and even join in a year at a low cost!" He said like a salesman.

Xiao Shiqin was still stunned, but the Ye Xiu-esque way he said it made him regain himself a little and he drawled.

"*What's the drawback?*" There must be something in this deal. This senior was good at making tricky deals.

But Ye Xiu just listed a few things, "Limited or most preferably *no* advertising. I'd prefer to not show my face if I don't have to, but I suppose I shouldn't make everyone poorer so I'll go enough times so you won't get the fines. My new account is unspecialized. I'd like to use him instead of a battle mage. Speaking of battle mages though, I found a person who would be an excellent addition to your training camp. If you have one. But if you don't, that's fine. I'm willing to help you start one up. By the way, I'd like to join as soon as the year is up, but if starting in the middle of Season 9 is too much, Season 10 is okay too. Speaking of Season 10, I come in a package deal, but I think I don't need to explain."

Xiao Shiqin, who had been listening both seriously and in exasperation, finally responded, "*You don't*." Anyone, even if they were not a master tactician, could tell that it was Su Mucheng. They were Best Partners, and anyone who knew Ye Xiu enough, also knew that Su Mucheng and Ye Xiu were close like siblings. He wouldn't even be surprised if Su Mucheng called him demanding to transfer or personally canceled her contract herself to

leave Excellent Era and join the team Ye Xiu was going to even before he officially joined once the year of retirement was up.

*"We would be happy to have her."* An All Stars who was also popular and brought in much revenue was something Thunderclap, both team and management, greatly desired. *"And you, even if you don't reveal your face or participate in any commercial activities."* And who wouldn't want God Ye? A lot more avenues and tactics sprouted in his mind with the powerful addition and Xiao Shiqin could finally feel that the championship was doable again. He almost collapsed in his chair with relief, feeling a lot of burdens on his heart lifted. He was thinking about joining a strong team, feeling a little despair and down this past season, but if Ye Xiu joined, he wouldn't have to go to Excellent Era to experience what it was like to fight with strong allies at hand. He wanted to know the feeling so much. After feeling so weak and cornered, helpless and incapable, he wanted to know the feeling of trust and capability and the tyrannical strong demeanor that Excellent Era once had when Ye Xiu had won those first three seasons. And Ye Xiu himself joining Thunderclap was like a dream.

It still felt like one. *"I have never heard of an unspecialized account, but if it's you, I'm sure it will be fine. I'll go talk to the boss."*

"Thanks, Captain!"

Xiao Shiqin almost tripped. He fixed his glasses a little. *"You can just call me Shiqin or Little Xiao as usual, senior."*

Ye Xiu laughed, "Okay, okay. Let me know when you want to call me. This is an internet café line."

Because Ye Xiu had no phone, Xiao Shiqin thought exasperatedly, but agreed.

He turned to see Dai Yanqi's happy, expectant face. "How?"

Dai Yanqi giggled in a non-answer and Xiao Shiqin shook his head in fond exasperation. Their rookie was like a miracle worker, a very chaotic one, but her growth this season and the last had been amazing and to find Senior Ye after his retirement and convince him to join? If that wasn't a miracle, he didn't know what was. He was still in a daze that this was happening.

"I'll go talk to the manager and boss then." He said, getting out of his seat.

"Thanks, Captain!" Dai Yanqi cheered.

---

And so, Ye Xiu quietly joined Thunderclap to Thunderclap's amazement and cheer, and no one else's knowing.

There had been a huge welcome party for him and Ye Xiu was quite stunned by it, having not expected such a warm welcome. Dai Yanqi thought about Excellent Era uncharitably and made sure that Ye Xiu knew that he was *very* welcomed and loved in Thunderclap throughout the party.

Although he was just doing guild work and coaching right now, his salary was much higher than what Excellent Era had given him. It would get higher when he joined the team in the Season 9 winter transfer window. They couldn't afford to pay him like the god level player he was, but they would give him a salary like Xiao Shiqin's even if he didn't do the commercial activities. His strength and a higher chance at victory was what they wanted. Thunderclap wasn't known for their appearances or making appearances anyways.

Ye Xiu was in awe that they offered to keep his appearance a secret. Su Mucheng's addition later on was going to cover all the costs of having them and the fines of not appearing anyways, but Ye Xiu knew their situation and shook his head. Now that his name was fixed and since his parents knew he was playing Glory since Season 3, he was fine with appearing and helping ease their finances a little more.

They needed a lot for their team and club to develop anyways. More computers, more guild workers and R&D, a better training camp. There had been a training camp, but it was very small and lacking compared to what he was used to seeing. He would soon work on that.

Although Ye Xiu wouldn't be able to join until mid-season Season 9, he would give them their money's worth and make sure that they didn't regret it.

---

To Thunderclap, God Ye was really God Ye and a miracle worker.

The training camp flourished, and after the first week, some of the kids brought over their friends and more parents paid for their eager kids to join the camp. And the growth in the number of students wanting to learn and in the students' personal growth had continued, even with the kids not knowing that their newest part-time teacher and supervisor was God Ye. A lot of the lessons had been revamped, the training became a lot harder but more fulfilling and efficient, and there was an additional optional course in the training camp added for students interested in learning how to research and review game matches and create strategies like a tactician.

It was more hands-on, advanced, and mind-oriented than the others, but a surprisingly lot of the trainees joined, eager to hear the fascinating game analyses of their already favorite teacher and improve their own tactical consciousness. Ye Xiu was quite moved. Many Excellent Era trainees didn't like this kind of class and work, calling it boring or thinking that it was too much, too hard, and unimportant. A lot of it went over their heads and they disdained it so Ye Xiu stopped trying over a certain time and didn't offer it anymore. And it was quite a lot, required a lot of critical thinking for themselves, a lot of studying and hard work, but it seemed that there were quite a lot of kids in W City who were open to that. It wasn't that they were smarter, but they were a lot more humble, eagerly asking a lot of questions without concern for their face among their peers, open and eager to learn and do the extra effort no matter how immense, and fascinated and wanting to hear his thoughts on every video they found for him. They actually took the initiative to find game videos to analyze, share, ask him if they were right, and ask him to share his thoughts.

Was something different in the water for W City kids? Even Team Thunderclap, although admittedly mediocre in skill compared to other pro players though he was going to help with



that, were happy, eager learners, listeners, and hard workers. Ye Xiu couldn't help but be touched and he happily listened and shared his thoughts to both trainees and future teammates.

It was a nice change, God Ye more than welcomed it having always wanted the next generation to be more creative and tactically aware, and Thunderclap was happy, especially when the kids all joined Guild Thunderclap to join and help their new favorite teacher in getting as much material and BOSS as he wanted. The wild BOSS fights in the Heavenly Domain were actually what Ye Xiu used as their tactical course's hands-on activity for learning how to command their party members. They did it in their free time even when Ye Xiu wasn't watching over them to offer advice and hints however, finding it fun and wanting to improve to make their teacher even more amazed and happy.

It was of a large help. With the increased number of players participating in Thunderclap's wild BOSS hunts and God Ye's help, Guild Thunderclap was winning more BOSS fights and gaining a lot more material for Team Thunderclap's silver equipment R&D. With how everyone was noticing the meteoric rise of Guild Thunderclap, the guild also got more members. Especially from those who were curious and heard about how Thunderclap was open to training them on how to be better at Glory.

And so, even with no finances to hire more guild workers, the club suddenly got a lot more volunteer trainees and ordinary players within a month to join the effort.

The R&D department was happy. God Ye already came by to visit to offer and update their database with what surprising lot he knew and now they even had a lot more materials to experiment with and use for their team.

The R&D department was already happy. Even if God Ye didn't do all that, they would be because Lord Grim's weapon was the most fascinating thing they had ever heard of and seen and they were salivating over it. And the notebook containing the experiments and research put into it. They promised to help him find a way to continue leveling it after it got to Level 50.

Meanwhile, Ye Xiu was really happy. He was having a hard time to catch up because every guild elite in the tenth server had multiple players leveling their account, but now he could do the same and Lord Grim was on 24/7, constantly leveling. He happily left the grinding to the guild workers placed in charge and worked on the more important wild BOSS fights and dungeon clears of the Heavenly Domain. When he wasn't at the training camp with the kids or in the training room with the team, he was there, happily terrorizing the other guilds and getting his material.

He still went on Lord Grim every night to form the same party with Soft Mist, Cleansing Mist, Steamed Bun Invasion, and One Inch Ash though. They all joined the tenth server Guild Thunderclap, causing a mass influx of new ordinary players following him, also wanting to be in the same guild as Lord Grim when they realized he was there to stay. It more than made up for the deals he couldn't do for the other guilds anymore.

With so many ordinary players to contribute materials to the guild, he didn't need to sell his services to the other guilds anymore. The players in his guild were more than enough. They

leveled up the guild quickly and Ye Xiu didn't have to worry about the new players having no shepherd because Thunderclap did have enough guild workers to send a person over to manage the guild and babysit them and make sure that the new players didn't fall for some nonsense that could sometimes be put out in the game forums.

The other guilds cried, but Ye Xiu happily continued breaking dungeon records and leading wild BOSS hunts here too and playing with his team that now all had guild tags.

This, of course, attracted some attention though.

**Yu Wenzhou:** Senior joined Thunderclap?

Ye Xiu didn't even bother to deny.

**Ye Qiu:** Little Xiao offered me a home! [person happily sits under a roof sheltering them from rain]

**Yu Wenzhou:** Blue Rain can offer you a home too.

**Ye Qiu:** Hahaha, but I already accepted and settled down.

Yu Wenzhou frowned, wanting to type that it was a pity because he had wanted Ye Xiu with him but hadn't thought the senior would accept so hadn't offered, but now regretted that he hadn't. He wondered what led to Xiao Shiqin making the offer and Ye Xiu accepting, both actions a bit uncharacteristic and out of the blue for them, but he supposed they wouldn't answer. It also didn't matter. He already lost his chance.

**Yu Wenzhou:** I'm glad to see that you are doing alright. Well, if you ever find yourself needing a place again, think of Blue Rain first. Also, be kind to Blue Brook please, senior.

**Ye Xiu:** Thanks! And hehe, I'll think about it!

Yu Wenzhou shook his head in amusement. That was no positive answer. He made a note to tell Liang Yichun to try allying with Thunderclap in the wild BOSS fights when none of the pro players had time to help him. With God Ye leading the forces and Guild Thunderclap surprisingly increasing in numbers, skill, and morale (what did that senior do?), it would be hard to go against them without any pro players.

Wang Jiexi also asked Ye Xiu, sadly congratulating him on finding a team and imploring him to think of Tiny Herb if he ever left Thunderclap. Ye Xiu also thanked him, happy to have such caring friends. Huang Shaotian was a bit noisier and kept talking about the wonders of Blue Rain in comparison to the poor Thunderclap when he found out and Ye Xiu snickered.

Chen Yehui, who also was someone who knew that Lord Grim was Ye Xiu at this time, gritted his teeth when he saw the Thunderclap tag, but scoffed derisively at the fallen god, mocking him with an evil condescending smile. Of course, he fell so hard that he would sell himself to the poorest team in the league. Really, how the gods fell. Once a captain of a championship team and now a nobody in a little guild for a weak, poor team who can't even get to playoffs. He didn't even bother to report it because him joining *Thunderclap* was so inconsequential and just evidence that Excellent Era and his revenge plot succeeded and God Ye was now living miserably. He, of course, ignored that Excellent Era currently was doing poorly in results, even more so than Thunderclap right now. And that Thunderclap wasn't a bad team at all, still able to do well against giants in the league, especially for home games where they got to choose the map.

Finally, the team itself was flourishing with God Ye's presence. Their morale shot up a lot and they began really believing that they could win a championship. The dream became a little closer and more real and they became spirited and excited. The training times were a lot more energetic and happy these days too, though the training became a little harder as God Ye helped organize their exercises and also fought with them frequently too. That was something else that made them squeal with joy. They had a *god* level player as their coach and training partner! He was giving them advice and personally helping them train! And it was amazing.

Of course, they realized that Dai Yanqi had this treatment for a long while now and they all asked her how she even knew God Ye. Dai Yanqi just giggled and told them that they wouldn't believe it. They all tried telling her that they would and they just wanted to know, but she never let up. It was obvious to anyone though that God Ye and Dai Yanqi were close though. Dai Yanqi got treatment seemingly equivalent to God Ye's treatment of Su Mucheng and the way they sparred or talked spoke of great familiarity and closeness. They were jealous.

Xiao Shiqin was a little too, even had a faint idea of what was going on and sighed in his heart but was resignedly happy for the two. And he was just happy that he had an opportunity to be so close to Ye Xiu. Ye Xiu was like a phantom in the Alliance. He appeared to the sight rarely and when he did, he was like a powerful light - radiant and dazzling. Sometimes, he was a gentle and warm light, one that was soothing to bask in, but many times, he was that powerful presence that attracted all of them. His Glory was undeniably attractive - and seeing it up close so many times right now only made him filled with even more awe and love. It was hard not to admire God Ye's strength and love for Glory.

It was also hard not to feel anything more for him. Ye Xiu was a pillar and Xiao Shiqin found himself relaxing and relying on him for support. He always knew that he needed someone, maybe not a partner like the ones that formed dual cores, but at least someone who he could trust and rely on- and Ye Xiu was that person. Not only did he help him plan for the next

matches, offering his valuable insight and experience and thoughts, he helped him with the post-match reviews and supported him in the games that Thunderclap had lost. Helped him with those and helped him guide the team in learning from their mistakes and getting stronger so that the same ones wouldn't be made.

Ye Xiu understood him, could provide him with the intellectual conversations he sometimes craved and once could only get in the rare discussions that lit up the master tacticians group chat, and could also comfort, assist, and support him like no other. He was already valuable as a second tactician and sounding board in tactical discussions and as a coach in the training room, and Xiao Shiqin couldn't wait until Season 9 when he could fight with him on the battlefield.

They wouldn't be a dual core. But they would be strong allies, even *teammates* and comrades fighting together for glory.

He was excited.

The team and management were happy. Even without God Ye's appearing or playing on the team, the money and performance results were already flowing with the increase in the training camps and rise of their guild and team. They honestly wondered what happened to Excellent Era for things to happen like that, but they were happy because it gave them the god that the other team hadn't appreciated.

---

In the middle of all this, All Stars happened and Tang Rou joined Thunderclap when Ye Xiu offered and Tang Rou thought about it and decided to follow this person who had always treated her well and was still her goal to beat. She also didn't think that the other teams could offer her as much as Ye Xiu. In the time she spent with him, she always felt like he was the best and his lessons and advice were something no one else could offer. Thunderclap happily welcomed her, instantly recognizing her as the ordinary player that had fought with Du Ming during the All Stars. Meanwhile, Chen Guo complained a little that Ye Xiu not only left after a month of work, but also took another one of her employees with him. She was happy for the two though. Chen Guo didn't know much about Thunderclap, but these two were going to be pro players! Her friends, her own employees, were going to be on that stage! She quickly encouraged Tang Rou to go. Not that Tang Rou who had already been so determined needed it, but she appreciated it and promised to keep in contact.

During All Stars itself, Xiao Shiqin also got in contact with Qiao Yifan. Ye Xiu didn't go to All Stars, insisting at staying safe in the club building far away from S City and Thunderclap indulged him, but he got a phone thanks to Thunderclap's insistence and when he watched the broadcast, he saw the rookie challenge, called, and asked Xiao Shiqin to help him comfort the rookie. Xiao Shiqin wasn't all aware of Ye Xiu's adventures as Lord Grim, but he did and listened as Ye Xiu talked to Qiao Yifan on the phone, encouraging the young man to go on. Xiao Shiqin also offered his encouragement and Qiao Yifan thanked him. Later, when he watched Ye Xiu lead his usual team through a dungeon, he understood what Ye Xiu saw in the Tiny Herb rookie and Thunderclap got another prospect on their hands.

Qiao Yifan had a Level 70 ghostblade account too so he happily joined Team Thunderclap and Ye Xiu in Level 70 dungeons and wild BOSS hunts when Xiao Shiqin offered through Ye Xiu. He couldn't leave Tiny Herb now, but he could get training and practice that he wouldn't otherwise with a team he saw himself going to in the future. After the first week, really, all of Thunderclap reciprocated that thought and already saw the cinnamon roll as their own.

Due to his adventures on the Heavenly Domain, there was also something else that had happened. Ye Xiu came across Wei Chen. He couldn't offer the guy a position on Thunderclap that already had so many members, but when he heard about the skill points research that Wei Chen had made after jokingly taking his silver weapon for ransom, Ye Xiu realized and offered to improve it at the cost of being able to share the guide with Thunderclap. Wei Chen was skeptical, but trusted Ye Xiu. Ye Xiu got their part-timer Luo Ji who often discussed maps with Xiao Shiqin and helped in the R&D after Ye Xiu recruited him. And Ye Xiu gave him the skill points research to work on. Luo Ji happily took on the challenge and the skill points guide was made. Everyone who saw it was amazed. Thunderclap was overjoyed to raise their skill points, some of them to the max, and Wei Chen happily took his improved guide and followed Ye Xiu's advice to sell it to a team with money.

It went to Heavenly Sword. Xiao Shiqin was happy that it did. He knew he would get headaches if it had gone to Samsara, an already powerful team, instead and Samsara was the second on the list of best options that Ye Xiu had given to Wei Chen who devotedly listened to Ye Xiu's advice on how to get rich fast and efficient with the guide.

Ye Xiu could be really convincing.

Granted, everything he said was true so of course it would be convincing, but Xiao Shiqin was still quite impressed with how Ye Xiu had talked the retired pro through his options and got the unreconciled Wei Chen to join Team Heavenly Sword, possibly the only team that would both need him and take him in. Xiao Shiqin smiled. His future teammate really cared about others. He didn't have to, but he helped Wei Chen make the most out of his hard-earned research and he also helped the retired pro to realize his regret and led him to a team that would accept him so that he could rejoin the glorious pro circle and try again. He also didn't have to help his future rival team, but he did, leading a veteran to them. And everyone with half a brain in the pro circle knew that Heavenly Sword would need a veteran to wake them up from their too idealistic dream and help them actually have a chance at staying in the league. Wei Chen would do just the job and even help them train and keep their place in the standings.

But that was another story.

More importantly, the training camp, guild, R&D, club, and team of Thunderclap were growing like bamboo stalks.

Thunderclap safely entered the top eight, made it to the playoffs, won against Tiny Herb in the quarter-finals, but narrowly lost to Samsara afterwards. Although they lost, Thunderclap celebrated having made it to the semi-finals, the first in their team history. It seemed like their future would only get brighter, especially with how Ye Xiu was going to be with them for Season 9, even joining them in the latter half of the season and the playoffs afterwards. They

were all confident now that they could make the playoffs. It was hard not to when Ye Xiu kept saying that they were going to win the championship already. It made them all laugh, but their hearts were burning to make it a fact.

Especially because Ye Xiu did seem a bit down since the regular season had ended weeks ago and Excellent Era was one of the teams that had been eliminated. They all tried to cheer him up to his laugh and he said he was fine, but there was still a tiny air of grief around him. They didn't know the details of what Excellent Era did to him and honestly all full-heartedly thought that every performance decline that the team ever had was not Ye Xiu's fault because look what Ye Xiu's presence did to Thunderclap, but they were even more bitter and mad at Excellent Era for losing so badly and making their friend feel like this. Xiao Shiqin honestly told them that Excellent Era contacted him and they all happily cheered and vehemently agreed with their captain's firm refusal to transfer and join them.

They didn't deserve their captain. Especially not when they used and threw away their future vice-captain.

With Excellent Era out and without a tactician to join them though, Excellent Era's prospects seemed far and the club decided to sell, shocking everyone even more. They all thought that they would go through Challengers to make a comeback!

All of Thunderclap from the boss to the team to the guild workers looked at Ye Xiu worriedly when Ye Xiu asked for a few days leave and went to H City. The boss went with him, saying that he needed to go anyways. Ye Xiu nodded and the break became an all expenses paid business trip.

They returned with Su Mucheng, Dancing Rain, Guan Rongfei, and a good portion of Excellent Era's R&D staff and materials. Ye Xiu had a soft smile on his lips and Su Mucheng later told the team that his apprentice, Qiu Fei, was going to bring Excellent Era to rise out of its ashes. They hadn't fallen yet. Excellent Era would be a powerful rival in the future, even with how things were now, but they were all glad to hear it. Especially with how it made Ye Xiu finally fully happy.

Of course, Ye Xiu was theirs though.

They were keeping him and weren't ever going to give him back.

---

Ye Xiu stared at the chains that Dai Yanqi gave to him. They were normal chains that a person could buy at the hardware store to lock their fences or things like that, but he was stunned that he was actually given chains.

Dai Yanqi beamed, "You promised! One cosplay outfit for every game I won against a mid-tier or higher level pro player! Or became MVP in the team challenge!"

Su Mucheng giggled. Although she felt a little bad for Chu Yunxiu, she didn't want to miss out again so she asked for their usually summer-long trips to be just a week long so that she

could spend it with Dai Yanqi and Ye Xiu. Who were both together!! She was so going to get revenge and show Ye Xiu what she thought of his betrayal for taking so long to tell her!

"...Where are you even going to chain me?" Ye Xiu finally asked helplessly, gesturing to the messy room.

"Of course, we'll just make it look like you're chained to something and still use the green screen!" Dai Yanqi said to Ye Xiu's relief, but then she whispered seducively. "But later, when Sis Su's gone, I can chain you on the bed."

"Little Dai!" Ye Xiu chastised, startled and even scandalized, and Su Mucheng laughed, having never ever heard that tone from Ye Xiu before. Dai Yanqi grinned unrepentantly, but she admitted,

"Just kidding, just kidding! Come on, I want to take the pictures! There's a lot of pictures I want to take this summer!"

Ye Xiu and Dai Yanqi were both going to help with the guild and Ye Xiu, the training camp also, for the most of the summer so they didn't have as much time as before. Dai Yanqi wanted all her pictures though so she was going to concentrate most of them into a few days with the help of Su Mucheng.

Ye Xiu gave the chains a look and sighed. A promise was a promise... And the girls were excited and happy... He pitifully gave in and listened to their instructions.

---

They also discussed the Sanxiu series as they spent a portion of the summer at Dai Yanqi's house together. (Dai Yanqi sighed. Of course, Su Mucheng would know how to cook and make her mother absolutely adore her and use her as an example too.)

The season had been busy, but the second story was finished and Ye Xiu was absolutely happy with how he and Su Muqiu in the novel had won a championship against the odds and restored Excellent Era to its former glory. Both he and Su Mucheng were also happy by the positive response, many people who didn't like romance even flocking to the story because of the renown battle scenes written in it. Every Glory fan that read it adored the attention to detail, the tense fights, elaborate schemes, highlights that they could imagine being played out like a film reel in their heads, and deep game analyses that opened their minds because most Glory players didn't even notice a tenth of this going on in real life Glory games with professional commentators.

A lot of people praised the author and Dai Yanqi praised Ye Xiu and Ye Xiu was proud. It was ridiculous to feel pride over winning imaginary battles, but he was. He unrepentantly was.

With how Excellent Era fell recently, there were also many readers who wondered what it would be like if Samsara bought Sun Xiang and One Autumn Leaf and the two joined Zhou Zekai and Cloud Piercer. Would they be able to see this in action?

Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng also wondered. Ye Xiu also thought it was highly likely and he quietly wanted to see what it was like too.

Of course, they wouldn't be as good as him and Su Muqiu though!

With the second story over however, that marked the end of the series.

Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng was kind of sad, reluctant to let their friend and brother go again.

But thankfully, Dai Yanqi was more than happy to indulge them. "Second championship or another setting? What do you think about sentinels and guides?"

Ye Xiu perked up, chuckled, and thought about it. Then, he offered, "Actually. What do you think about an international competition?"

His audience of two was intrigued and Dai Yanqi happily planned national teams of original characters with Su Mucheng and him, an entire scene where the best players in China fought together in a world tournament, Su Muqiu and Ye Xiu at the forefront!

It had been their summer project, Ye Xiu focusing on the battles, Su Mucheng on the drama and other plot points, and her on writing and filling in the rest of the details.

It went by fast, the month long imaginary world competition only able to be so long, but the three were proud of that too. The third story got an even bigger reception, many more Glory fans flocking to it, excited and awed by the thought of an international competition. Glory on the world stage! The new readers didn't even care that there was a male original character added to the Chinese national team list, just excited to read about the Chinese national team of All Star players beating the other teams and winning glory for China!

---

It was a fun summer.

Though Ye Xiu could do without the return of animal ears. It seemed that they multiplied from cat and fox to cat, fox, wolf, panda, bunny, cow... With how Dai Yanqi even painted scales on his face and arms so that he could be a snake-person or something and then a dragon-kin when she gave him dragon antlers with Photoshop on her computer, Ye Xiu was sure that they were creating a virtual zoo of animal Ye Xius.

The thought was kind of scary.

He didn't watch as the girls cooed over the photos. The countless werepeople he resembled, the countless clothes he wore from service uniforms like butler suits to traditional outfits like kimonos, from aristocratic clothes to synthetic leather outfits, and from casual modern day outfits to fantasy like steampunk costumes.

The fake One Autumn Leaf costume was good. Autumn Tree and even Lord Grim too. There didn't need to be so many costumes in the world.



But Ye Xiu admitted that he did like seeing them happy so if this made them smile, then so be it. It was tiring, but it wasn't that bad to spend a portion of the day for a few days a year doing. They worked hard on Glory and deserved a little reward, Ye Xiu would always remind himself.

Dai Yanqi sent him an updated Ye Xiu expression pack with cosplay Ye Xiu emoticons and Ye Xiu downloaded them as always but promised himself in embarrassment to never use them no matter how cute and representative of his emotions at times many of them admittedly were.

His little devil was growing to know him and how to mess with him too well. It was kind of nice. He missed this kind of antics when Su Muqiu left. They had liked teasing and messing with each other back then, and when he went, it felt like most of that kind of interaction and fun went with him.

But he almost wanted to tell the phantom in his mind now: Look, you don't have to worry about me. I have someone who is as silly and ridiculous as you again. She's not you, will never, but she makes me happy too.

Dai Yanqi and Ye Xiu joined the guild along with the others of Team Thunderclap. Su Mucheng also played together with them in the guild for a week before she went on a trip with her best friend, Chu Yunxiu, as she always had over summer. She would come back during the summer before Season 9 again though. After all, as a new player of the team, she would also need to spend some time practicing with her new teammates.

---

After the summer transfer window, Samsara, Tyranny, and Thunderclap all gained a lot of attention.

Sun Xiang and One Autumn Leaf were bought by Samsara, who had already been strong and the Season 8 champions. With a powerful god-level melee fighter, Samsara also finally solved one of its biggest weaknesses. They were a team to watch out for.

Tyranny also caused a clamor though. Lin Jingyan and Zhang Jiale - Tyranny became a powerful team of veterans and everyone was awed by the nearly complete All Stars team lineup they could make in future team challenges.

Finally, everyone was stunned when Su Mucheng and Dancing Rain went to Thunderclap. Thunderclap had been somewhat of a dark horse last season. Dai Yanqi became one of the most promising rookies of her generation with her meteor-like rise in skills. The entire team had also gotten a lot stronger as if they had just went through a training through hell. The morale was also high and it was seen in their bolder, stronger movements in the matches. The guild also underwent some kind of change and gained many people, even attracted elite players to join, as the guild got stronger, more tactical and successful, and better as a whole. Many wild BOSS went to Guild Thunderclap during Season 8 as if a godly hidden expert had joined the guild and all were surprised. And now, Thunderclap, a team that was once considered mediocre, had two All Stars - one of which was the popular goddess Su Mucheng.

Everyone wondered what attracted her to join and how Thunderclap which was considered poor in finances got to buy her contract and account card for a really low price.

(Thunderclap grumbled and thought uncharitably that even if Tao Xuan let them have the two at a low price, it didn't make up for all that he did to God Ye and her.)

They were also stunned by the addition of two rookies. A newcomer who was also a girl that they all recognized as the ordinary player that fought against Du Ming in the Season 8 All Stars. And an unknown Tiny Herb rookie that they all saw lose extremely badly in the same All Stars. There were some speculation about the two's prospects and Thunderclap's moves, but most of the attention went to the more eye-catching transfers of Samsara and Tyranny.

And Season 9 began.

## Chapter End Notes

Notes:

[1] I want to call him Xiao Xiao so bad, but I decided to stick with translating the Chinese terms so Little Xiao. But Xiao Xiao is so cute. I just have to say it once somewhere.

[2] In my original thoughts, YX was Happy through and through. When I wrote out the fic however, my hands typed Thunderclap and I was like No... *Happy*. But my hands said Thunderclap and I gave up. Fine, Thunderclap. This changed a lot of the plans in my head though. I'm not even sure if I can fulfill the summary anymore. Thanks, hands.

[3] This just keeps getting longer and longer haha. It was originally going to be a oneshot. But then it became a plan for three. And then Thunderclap!YX happened and it became a plan for four. I wasn't going to write Season 8 or 9 either, just planned to skip all the way to after Season 10, but this fic just keeps writing itself.

## Season 9 (First Half)

As expected, Samsara and Tyranny started the new season off with a bang.

It was just the first day, but all the game commentators, reporters, and Glory fans were going crazy over their powerful team lineups. Many people were already claiming that these two would be the final contenders in the playoffs and some commented how this season finals would be the battle between the young rising stars and the powerful experienced veterans at the pinnacle of their glory. Would the new rise up and overthrow these ancient gods?

The reporters were already writing the headlines.

In comparison, Thunderclap, despite its many changes, seemed relatively hidden and unknown. But there were still some who saw this relatively invisible team and its many improvements and knew that there were countless hidden dangers.

Yu Wenzhou looked at the game video of Thunderclap's first match of the season and commented, "It's really not easy."

"What's not easy?" Huang Shaotian asked before looking over to see the Thunderclap and Lightly match. "Oh! Thunderclap? It really isn't! Everyone talks about Samsara and Tyranny, not realizing that Old Ye's also coming back and look at how they are moving! From the second half of last season, you could already see his influence! They're really not the timid team they once were, just relying on map advantages and tactics! They're getting so bold and knowing that they have Su Mucheng as support will only make them even more fearless!"

It was true. Since last season, those with an eye for tactics could tell that Xiao Shiqin was getting more courageous in the way he used the team. Before, he only relied on defensive strategies and counterattacks, seemingly trusted the map and tactics more than his teammates. And there was a basis for it, sure, because the other players of Thunderclap weren't as strong as many other players, but because of this, he almost never tried high level maneuvers, tactics that would strain his players despite how if it were pulled off would be yielding great profits, and many times carried an aura of resignation or defeat in his strategies like he already thought he was weak and the team couldn't go on no matter how much he wanted to.

After around the time Lord Grim joined Guild Thunderclap however, these former things have seemed to disappear and Team Thunderclap had been doing much better since. Xiao Shiqin didn't have someone physically with him in the matches, but his plays felt like he actually did have a supportive partner at his side, a dual core, and his tactics felt like he was renewed with spirit and courage, was inspired and backed by a great tactician counterpart as his companion, guardian, and advisor. Thunderclap had really become bolder.

And of course they will only continue to do so in the team challenges because this season, they had Su Mucheng. She wasn't god level, but she didn't make it to All Stars solely based on her popularity. No, she was an ace player that Thunderclap needed and her support would only cause Thunderclap to soar like giving mithril armor and wings to a soldier going to war.

And Yu Wenzhou could already imagine what giving Thunderclap a powerful god level player could do for the once weak team.

The first Thunderclap match was a very anticlimactic battle because Lightly was small and weak, but within it Yu Wenzhou could see some more hints of the changes that Thunderclap made this season. Their attacks were a lot heavier and Yu Wenzhou wasn't sure if it was because of the new equipment upgrades many of the team avatars had or some other factor like skill points addition. It was hard to tell because Team Thunderclap used to have around the Alliance average amount of silver for their avatars, but it was clear that the guild worked immensely hard because almost all the avatars now had at least two to four more pieces of silver on them. The addition of silver definitely boosted their stats.

Although they were against a weak team, Yu Wenzhou could also tell that Thunderclap's players also improved in strength and experience as if they had continuously fought against many high level pro player accounts of all classes. Or in their case, just one pro player who could use all classes at a high level. Having God Ye, both the Glory Textbook and Battle God, as a sparring partner was certainly extravagant and amazing, Yu Wenzhou thought wryly before closing the tab.

It really was a pity that he hadn't just asked Ye Qiu to join him while the other had still been wandering around on his own on the tenth server. He really hadn't realized that Ye Qiu was open to joining a team not Excellent Era, still wondered about how Thunderclap had lured the ancient god.

But it was too late.

Yu Wenzhou sighed.

He had seen enough.

It was time to make preparations for Blue Rain's next match.

Besides Yu Wenzhou, there was Zhang Xinjie who was now very certain that Ye Qiu joined Thunderclap after studying the differences in his fellow master tacticians' strategies. Lord Grim was under Guild Thunderclap and Su Mucheng joined the team afterwards, but he never liked to make speculative guesses until he had all the evidence he needed to be able to fully claim the fact. Although there was still some room for error, Zhang Xinjie sighed and began making preparations as well. All the news was on them and Samsara, but Thunderclap wasn't one to be underestimated this season either.

Meanwhile, there was also Wang Jiexi who had seen the hidden danger that was Thunderclap. He had watched their game to see the progress of the former battle mage he had wanted to recruit. Tang Rou had evidently grown stronger and will only continue to rise. It was a pity that he failed to recruit her. Wang Jiexi had also been pleasantly surprised that Qiao Yifan played, not as an assassin but as a ghostblade, and he seemed to be doing well for himself. He hadn't known that Qiao Yifan could play a good ghostblade. After the Season 8 All Stars, Wang Jiexi also thought that the year might be the end for Qiao Yifan, but it seemed that he had a lot of hidden talent. Wang Jiexi... was sad that he didn't realize it. But it

was good that Qiao Yifan was continuing Glory and making a name for himself. Gao Yingjie had been extremely happy when he saw the news.

And then there was Chu Yunxiu who also noticed. Though she also saw another kind of hidden danger.

When Chu Yunxiu first heard that Su Mucheng joined Thunderclap, she had been relatively disappointed that she couldn't have her best friend as a teammate at Misty Rain, happy that her friend wasn't quitting Glory yet, and confused because the team she went to was *Thunderclap*.

It was so random and out of field. Thunderclap couldn't even afford her full value. What did they do to lower the price? And how did they even convince Su Mucheng to go? There was no connection between the two.

She was confused so she decided to watch her friend's first match to check on her friend. And then she saw it.

A possible connection. Another kind of hidden danger. That is, *to the best friendship she had ever had in her life*.

Chu Yunxiu panicked.

**Chu Yunxiu:** Mumu?

**Chu Yunxiu:** Mumu!!! Are you replacing me?! Did you replace me?!

**Chu Yunxiu:** Was the rookie challenge last year actually a friendship elimination match? Even if she was good, I still won! I'm still better! I'm still your lovely elementalist friend Xiuxiu, right? Right?

**Chu Yunxiu:** Mumu?

**Chu Yunxiu:** Mumu, why aren't you answering me?

**Chu Yunxiu:** I knew I should have went harder on her at All Stars! I thought the rookie challenge was just a show, but it turns out to be like this! All of the rookies that year were up to no good, huh? What evil hearts! The next generation are full of rabid dogs and vipers! Thieves and robbers! Stealing seniors' cards and titles and positions and now friendships?! They've gone too far! They all deserve a beating! Wait, I'm going to gather up the others! This is war!

**Su Mucheng:** Xiuxiu?

**Su Mucheng:** Wait, wait, I just got your text! Calm down! No war! Are you talking about Little Dai? Either way, I haven't and will never replace you! You'll always be my best friend!

**Chu Yunxiu:** Really?

**Su Mucheng:** Yeah!

Chu Yunxiu sighed in relief, but couldn't help but be a little skeptical.

**Chu Yunxiu:** But your coordination with her is too good for a recent transfer. You also went to Thunderclap of all teams. And you cut our plans this summer.

Chu Yunxiu was still a bit sad about that. She loved spending the whole summer with her friend, especially to forget about her team's results and the criticism of those around her for not being able to carry the team higher. A week was nice, but she had been so spoiled with having Mucheng the whole summer for so many years that it wasn't enough.

It also stung a little that her Misty Rain invitation had been rejected and the next time she saw her friend, she was doing well with another female elemental on that person's team instead.

**Su Mucheng:** Weelllll, we did play together for two years...

She really was a female lead who just caught their lover cheating behind their backs! Well, they were just best friends, but Chu Yunxiu internally cried.

**Chu Yunxiu:** She did steal you! That little witch- Mumu, I promise Misty Rain is better, I'm better, and nothing she says about me is true!

**Su Mucheng:** It's really not like that! Promise! Little Dai doesn't even talk about you.

**Chu Yunxiu:** I'm not even in her eyes? She thinks I'm not even a rival? Arrogance! Where does she get the confidence to steal friendships like that! Where do all these rookies get their arrogance from! I need Captain Han to beat them down again! No, I'm going to do it myself if she thinks she can replace me like that-

**Chu Yunxiu:** !!! Were you with her this summer? Was that the reason why my summer Mumu time was cut?

**Su Mucheng:** Uh... Let me talk to someone first, but I promise it's not like that! I met her because of another reason! I also joined Thunderclap for another reason! Our friendship is forever, Xiuxiu! And Little Dai doesn't care about me so you don't have anything to worry about!

**Chu Yunxiu:** She doesn't care about you? How dare she! You're the most wonderful, bestest friend to ever bless my life! I'm going over right now-!

**Su Mucheng:** [photo of butler ye xiu and maid dai yanqi standing back to back, holding bar drink service trays while giving playful smiles and winks to the camera]

**Chu Yunxiu:** [wide eyes]

**Su Mucheng:** Okay, he gave permission! But don't share with anyone and promise to keep it a secret!

**Chu Yunxiu:** [wide eyes]

**Su Mucheng:** But see? She's not interested in me in anything besides a sister in law!

**Chu Yunxiu:** [wide eyes]

**Su Mucheng:** And the reason why I played with her so often is because they made a deal two years ago that if Little Dai and I show proof of improvement, then Ye Xiu would cosplay for us, one costume per win! That was what we did over summer.

**Chu Yunxiu:** [wide eyes]

**Su Mucheng:** And of course, I followed Ye Xiu to Thunderclap.

**Chu Yunxiu:** [wide eyes]

**Su Mucheng:** Xiuxiu?

There were a lot of things to comment on, but Chu Yunxiu had *priorities*.

**Chu Yunxiu:** Can I get in on this deal?

**Su Mucheng:** Uh, let me ask Ye Xiu.

**Chu Yunxiu:** *Please.* And story. I need the story right now. I promise to keep it a secret, but please, the story! I don't think I can play until I hear the story! Take responsibility! I have to play; I'm a captain! How - what - I thought he was gay! What about AllYe? And since when? How did I not see this at all? *When? How? What happened?! What did I miss these two years?!*

Despite having been angry about it a while back, Chu Yunxiu whistled, thoroughly impressed by how Dai Yanqi really was a thieving cat. Not really because Ye Qiu was never anyone's, but damn. How did this rookie succeed in bagging *God Ye* while every other love rival was

still taking their time and floundering about? Did her captain know? Wow, each of the rookies from the Season 8 All Star rookie challenge really were planning on usurping thrones. Gao Yingjie beating his captain, Tang Hao usurping the First Brawler title and Wind Howl captain position, Sun Xiang trying to take the Battle God title and beat Captain Han, and now this. Was there something with that former Tiny Herb ghostblade on their team too? The Samsara rookie? What evil were those two planning?

So impressed!

She even got God Ye to come to her team! One of the reasons why Chu Yunxiu thought that it was Su Mucheng who chose to go and Dai Yanqi that had convinced Su Mucheng to go to Thunderclap was because not only was their coordination extremely good for 'people who only played for at most a month together', but also there was no reason for Ye Xiu who Su Mucheng followed to choose to join another team, much less Thunderclap. Chu Yunxiu thought that Ye Xiu either really had retired for good or would choose Excellent Era again or make a new team from scratch - would choose any of these over picking another team. And even if he did choose, it wouldn't be Thunderclap, practical nobodies in comparison with his other options! Thus, she thought it wasn't Ye Xiu's choice, but Su Mucheng's initiative to join Thunderclap which was also strange, but more likely than Ye Xiu having been the one to make this kind of decision.

But to think...

Dang. She was adopting this elementalist junior of hers! Really so impressed!

(She also needed the gossip and other pictures she knew that Dai Yanqi and Su Mucheng took of Ye Xiu so badly so close friendship was a must! There had to be a photo where that butler Ye Xiu was smiling seductively at the camera, she just knew it! Among many other things! She was already so excited inside just thinking about it!)

(When Su Mucheng relayed the question, Ye Xiu sighed and resigned to it. After personally wrangling a promise from Chu Yunxiu to keep everything private and a secret, of course. Chu Yunxiu swore on her dramas and Ye Xiu believed it and gave the go after talking to Dai Yanqi who was more than happy to have a third companion.

So much for thinking on a way to end the deal this season.

He smiled though. With a lot of extra motivation and two fellow sparring partners with the same shared mind, it seemed that he might see a meteoric rise in Chu Yunxiu's growth and performance as well. Of course, he just wished that he wasn't at the end of these women's shared goal.)

---

Chu Yunxiu was in the heavens when she got everything that she wanted.

Her vice captain took one look and promptly forgot what he was going to tell her and walked back out of the room.



(When Chu Yunxiu was that happy, it was normally because she just watched the best drama in the world, but Chu Yunxiu's taste was strange so Li Hua didn't want to hear the story. Had he known that this time the story was actually very good and very amazing and gossip the entire alliance would die to know, he would have regretted this decision. But he didn't. And it wasn't like Chu Yunxiu would tell him because she already promised. Though she would try to sign it out to him because this was *amazing*.)

**Chu Yunxiu:** You're kidding! That is so cute! I didn't know Ye Xiu read fanfiction!

**Su Mucheng:** Well, I recommended and shared them. And was the one who sent him to the convention that day to buy doujinshi for me. And it's not really that he actually ships himself with my brother, but that he just wanted to see a story with them together after what happened. Or at least just a story with him still alive. I feel the same though I never realized it until after I found Little Dai's work.

**Chu Yunxiu:** Awww, Mumu, many hugs [hug] [hug] [hug]

**Chu Yunxiu:** I'm happy for you two. I'm glad the world can know his Glory! Even before I learned he was real, I loved that series and Sanqiu and your brother!

**Su Mucheng:** :)

**Su Mucheng:** Thanks, Xiuxiu. [hug]

**Chu Yunxiu:** But still! I always thought that he didn't know anything besides Glory! But he actually does and he even wanted to read a ship and Dai Yanqi actually wrote it for him! That is so cute!

**Chu Yunxiu:** And why didn't I know that Little Dai is Fire Phoenix Rebirth?! And that one of my most recent favorite works is actually real! I was actually reading about the adorable childhood of my best friend and her brother and God Ye! Ahhh! I like her romance works a lot, but A Summer Ten Years Ago was just so cute and the two stories in the series after that were just amazing! And now I understand how her battle scene writings improved all of a sudden! It was God Ye!

**Chu Yunxiu:** Ahhhh, I wished you could have told me! This is amazing! I'm feel like I learned the best secret in the world! Best day of my life! I want to see Little Dai now and hug her! One of my favorite authors is my junior! I love her!

**Su Mucheng:** Haha, who was the one who just wanted to beat her earlier?

**Chu Yunxiu:** I have no idea what you are talking about. [hides knife]

**Chu Yunxiu:** But if she is stealing my bestie Mumu-

**Su Mucheng:** Never. We're besties forever, Xiuxiu~

**Chu Yunxiu:** [in love] [happy cats hug]

**Su Mucheng:** [happy cats hug]

And so, at least one of the possible dangers of Thunderclap's changes was resolved. (The only one not pertaining to the game, that is.)

But the team was still a hidden dark horse in the league.

And no one really realized until there was a game between Thunderclap and Samsara.

---

"And against Samsara..." There was the sound of paper shuffling over the mic as Pan Lin moved away from Samsara's written stats and profile to scan Thunderclap's information and then paused and then slowly said incredulously, "we also have a team that hasn't lost to any other team yet."

The entire stadium dropped to a dead silence.

Eyes widened.

So attracted to Samsara and Tyranny's powerful plays and domineering victories, they hadn't noticed at all that Thunderclap was the name under the two in the rankings. And also hasn't lost yet, the three having stunningly not met in the regular season yet.

Pan Lin read some of the information. It was seen that Team Thunderclap's wins weren't as impressive and perfect as Samsara or Tyranny, but the team was strong and were even getting better as time went on. They also were a rising star.

A powerful, tactical, scarily rising star, they all soon realized when Xiao Shiqin revealed the big flaw in the current Samsara's teamwork, baited the still very arrogant and self-reliant Sun Xiang away while trapping Zhou Zekai in another place as they killed off the rest of the team who lost both of their ace players. Team Thunderclap won the team challenge without losing a single member.

**Life Extinguisher:** A senior once told me, Glory was never meant to be played alone.

Xiao Shiqin wrote in the public chat of the team challenge when Samsara was down to their last member, Sun Xiang who still hadn't realized he was the last one left and still thought he could beat all of them by himself because they were a 'weak' team with 'weak' players. He still thought he could be enough, that they were nothing, but One Autumn Leaf fell under the assault of five players, unable to even touch a single health point of the 'weak players' under Xiao Shiqin's strategy and command.

The stadium was silent and then Thunderclap fans erupted into roars.

Samsara suffered their first defeat in Season 9. Thunderclap maintained their winning streak and even moved up in the rankings.

The newspapers and magazines all went wild, churning out papers declaring them as a major contender for the Season 9 championship. The fans went crazy, trying to figure out when and how it happened. When did Thunderclap change and become so good? What happened? Attention soon turned to Thunderclap, a spotlight on the once hidden contender. The club was happy, the team was proud, though Xiao Shiqin actually didn't like the increased attention that would also mean increased caution and research against them from their competitors.

Actually, Xiao Shiqin also hadn't wanted to type that in the chat. Hadn't wanted to play against Samsara the way they did. He wanted to use a more subtle approach to defeating Samsara, preferring to keep Samsara ignorant about their fatal weakness and the time bomb that was the current Sun Xiang, but Ye Xiu introduced the strategy and cautiously asked him and Xiao Shiqin couldn't help but follow, fondly exasperated by his senior's care for his juniors and their development and enjoyment of Glory.

Samsara was going to become stronger once they got through this, resolved their current team problems, and became a more tight-knit team that trusted and coordinated with each other... but his senior was happy and Xiao Shiqin believed that Thunderclap could still win. After all, they still had many plans and ways to defeat Samsara. They were a team with two master tacticians, three All Stars, and teammates who were rapidly growing in strength, quality, silver, and experience after all.

This season's Thunderclap was also confident in their pursuit for the championship!

So although it wasn't exactly what Xiao Shiqin wanted, he was happy. Samsara would get stronger, but they would too! They were under the spotlight and scrutiny of many others, but that was the fate of all strong competitors who aimed for the summit anyways. If they weren't willing to face this much pressure and the increased targeted research and preparations of their rivals, then what were they doing here? Xiao Shiqin smiled. No, it wasn't bad and he was confident that this time, they, Thunderclap, could do it.

Thunderclap continued training and fighting hard as usual. Although he wasn't an official member yet, Ye Xiu also continued working hard with him to train their team and prepare strategies against their competitors.

Ye Xiu also thanked his future captain for his little selfishness. Xiao Shiqin dismissed it as a small matter, admitting that it did feel good to have such a complete win against such a powerful team anyways. Ye Xiu cheekily said to get used to it because it'll be a feeling that he'll be getting more often once he joined the team. Shameless.

---

A few games after the Samsara v Thunderclap match, Dai Yanqi smiled when she saw Ye Xiu smiling at the video of Samsara's latest game.

"Better?" She asked, leaning on his shoulder to watch the game with him. One Autumn Leaf was finally moving with a team, coordinating with a sharpshooter. After so many years of

being alone and isolated with only Dancing Rain by his side and then almost another year of living in almost self-isolation and haughty independence, the battle mage was finally able to play as a real team again. After so many years of losing Autumn Tree, he was also able to finally partner with a sharpshooter again and the powerful combination dazzled the eyes.

"Yeah," Ye Xiu said softly, "Much better."

It wasn't an official game video so there were live comments on the bottom. One of them was amusingly one of Dai Yanqi's fans and they excitedly clamored that they were watching One Autumn Leaf and Autumn Tree combos in real life.

Ye Xiu laughed, "But they still have a lot to do if they want to catch up to me and Muqiu!" He chuckled and disagreed with the fan.

Dai Yanqi giggled as she agreed. She had never seen Ye Xiu and Su Muqiu play together in real life, but she believed it. That Ye Xiu and Su Muqiu were better. These two may eventually get there, but Ye Xiu would always be the most brilliant in her life and if he said Su Muqiu was the best too, then she will align with his thoughts and agree too. She liked seeing him happy. She also thought he should and was forever going to be invincible and happy in her heart. SanXiu over ZhouXiang! She internally cheered.

"What do you think about ZhouXiang though?" She couldn't help but ask after a while. After all, regardless of having favorites, she was still a shipper with many ships.

Ye Xiu gave her a look, a very familiar helpless look, but answered anyways, offering his thoughts on the possibility of such a pairing. Dai Yanqi giggled as they discussed.

Not too far away, Team Thunderclap were also helpless as they watched Dai Yanqi rope God Ye into another couple pairing conversation. It was too obvious now that they were together! Look at how close they were! No personal space at all! Dai Yanqi was practically half on God Ye! And look at how she was getting God Ye to talk with her about subjects half of them would leave the room immediately to avoid having to hear. God Ye, you're indulging her too much! Unknowingly betraying your brothers, half of which still have a crush on you! Since when did you even know anything about fanworks and ships and anything other than pure game and alliance Glory?!

Xiao Shiqin held his head, feeling a little pity for his former love rivals. They had no idea. No idea.

Xiao Shiqin still didn't know many things, like how the two even met and got together, but so many things. There were so many things his former love rivals had no idea of. Like, for example, how their crush had already been taken (*how? when??*) and it was by a girl who enthusiastically ships *ships* and, yes, he was very well aware of the concept of AllYe among other things because how could you not when you were anything with Dai Yanqi.

Xiao Shiqin wanted to cover his face and hide.

He coughed, everyone in the training room looked up at him, and he clapped his hands together. "Okay, break's over. Let's get back to training."

They all enthusiastically got back onto the training programs. Every pro player hated doing the daily menial drills, no matter how important it was for improving their overall mechanics, operation, and consistency, but this time, no one held any reluctance in their hearts except Dai Yanqi who pouted that she couldn't hear more of Ye Xiu's thoughts on Sun Xiang and Zhou Zekai dynamics in an Alpha, Beta, Omega universe.

As fascinating as Ye Xiu's insight was *even in this*, no one wanted to hear more of it. It was too surreal and freaky that God Ye even *had* an opinion. No doubt, only because she prompted him again, but still. They didn't think anything was stranger than hearing God Ye and Dai Yanqi talk about Glory ships and fanfiction plots.

Actually, now that they thought about, God Ye typing Glory doujinshi excerpts in a match would have even more devastating effects on opponent teams than Dai Yanqi's past success against Blue Rain during Season 7. With his APM, he could even type in more words.

Of course, no one offered such a cursed potential strategy to their captain. There were just some things that shouldn't be done.

---

Although Thunderclap got almost exponentially better compared to the previous seasons, Thunderclap, of course, couldn't always keep a winning streak. A lot of things improved and were still improving, but nothing could be a straight line and they too would hit blocks and plateaus. They too would lose the element of surprise as how every rookie or new thing would eventually be studied, calculated, and countered. They still had a long way to go like every other!

Glory was never that easy!

But the team was still depressed when they lost the match for the first time in the season, having been getting a little too confident and comfortable, a little too forgetful that their opponents were just as eager, determined, and hard working and so they must always be on the edge, vigilant and always looking to surpass their limits. Ye Xiu used the opportunity to encourage everyone to work harder, analyze their mistakes, think of solutions and things to do for the next time, and make improvements! Everyone was encouraged and they determined to start all over again.

After the loss however, Dai Yanqi couldn't help but keep thinking about her own big loss in the group challenge. She hadn't failed that badly in a long time and she couldn't help but doubt herself a little. Looking up at Ye Xiu who was accompanying her in her room having noticed earlier that she was still a little depressed, she hesitated but began.

"Ye Xiu. I want you to be straight with me."

Ye Xiu looked up from his computer and blinked.

"I've always been straight with you." He confessed, "You, on the other hand, I'm not sure."

It took a while for Dai Yanqi to get it, and when she did, she burst into giggles, losing all of her distress and depressive thoughts. "Okay," She laughed and confessed, even kissed him in her regained joy, "maybe I write a little too many BL of you with male players in the league, but this is different. Tell me." She insisted, looking at him. "Am I doing good?"

Ye Xiu placed his forehead against hers so that they could see each other's eyes. His were so sincere and warm. "Amazing." He said without the least bit of pause as they looked into each other's eyes. "Always, you've been doing amazing."

Pulling back and caressing her hair a little, he smiled, "Don't think too much about it! Glory is fun because there is both winning and losing! There's always a peak to climb higher, always more to learn and do, and always rivals who make everything so challenging and fun! Of course, we'll still win the championship however!"

Dai Yanqi was encouraged. She hugged him closely and beamed. "...Yeah!"

Ye Xiu hugged her back, patting the back of her head. "Don't worry. You're doing good." She made a noise of belief and felt a smile stretch against her hair, "And next year, you'll have me."

She burst into giggles again, hugging him tighter. "Yeah!" She grinned against his shirt, already joyous at imagining that day. Having not just Captain and Su Mucheng's support, not just her rising teammates, but also an invincible god's strength and support on the battleground. It was a bit shameless and arrogant and much to think that with him everything would be alright and only victories would be in store for them in the future because Ye Xiu was right, Glory was always evolving and getting harder and winning and losing was a very normal part of the competition that no one could escape, but she couldn't help but think that, yes, with him, everything would be alright and they would win together. Glory would appear above each of their heads at the end of the game, their avatars standing tall among the corpses of other players. She would be there with them, her teammates, with him.

She really wanted to see it already.

She also wanted to be able to support him like Su Mucheng had, to be standing at his side as his powerful and trusted partner like Su Muqiu had, and she found her spirit reinvigorated to train again. Reach for the top to stand at his side and also support him and do wonders as he had and would for her!

The loss was forgotten. Dai Yanqi looked towards the future and wanted it badly.

---

They stayed together for a long time. Ye Xiu happily helped Dai Yanqi figure out her mistakes and places for improvement and growth when she asked in determination for help. They spent a long time together analyzing game videos and playing coaching matches.

Later however, Dai Yanqi couldn't help but relax from their intense training. After her avatar was defeated and they didn't move to start another match, she stretched. A smile lifted her

lips as Ye Xiu gently took her hands and helped massage them. She didn't think she could ever stop thinking that he was the best boyfriend.

She relaxed, enjoying the feel of his fingers on hers. As her mind relaxed and drifted though, she couldn't help but remember his earlier amusing pun-words and ask, even getting a little excited from the sudden thoughts that appeared with them.

"Ye Xiu, are you sure you've always been straight with me?" The tiredness and seriousness of before flew away; fanfiction writer Dai Yanqi mode activating back again. "You've never once fantasized yourself with other guys like that, or even fantasized me as a guy pushing you down and being above you and-"

"Okay, I think we stayed up a little too long." Ye Xiu interrupted, deciding to end the massage here. He pulled her off the chair and began pushing her towards her bed at record speed. "Go to sleep."

"I promise I won't judge if you ever fantasized me as a guy pushing you down- Actually, I find that very exciting-!"

"Sleep." Ye Xiu repeated exasperatedly, still guiding her to her bed.

She went with him, but as soon as they reached the bed, she caught him by surprise and pulled her down with him.

"On the same bed?" She asked provocatively from below him, giggling at Ye Xiu's even more flustered and exasperated expression. His arms caged her against the bed, having barely stopped himself from falling on her. But they were still very close, enough to feel each other's body temperature. And she didn't let him pull away, keeping ahold of his arms. She was kind of serious though, a little curious of what it would be like, of seeing another side of Ye Xiu, of having him fully. Ye Xiu must have noticed because he answered seriously, but still with a little flustered expression.

"No. Not before marriage."

Although it was a little disappointing, Dai Yanqi couldn't help but smile. He was really such a gentleman, always thinking of her and how to treat her well. "Okay. I'll hold you to that." It'll be a long while until marriage because she wasn't going to retire for a long while, but she couldn't wait for that day. Although she agreed, she still yanked him fully down though, making him fully fall onto the bed next to her. Cuddling him, she mumbled, "But let's still sleep together." Even if the other kind had to wait until another day, she still wanted to be with Ye Xiu and enjoy his warm presence.

Ye Xiu sighed, but didn't leave. His arms even enveloped her and she quietly beamed especially when he shuffled a little to get the blanket to cover them, trapping them both under the warm covers. She slept to his heartbeat. Well, not before asking, "Okay, maybe you've always been straight with me, but have you had any fantasies of me?"

Ye Xiu exasperatedly covered her head with a portion of the blanket. "Sleep."

She giggled as she did and felt his small reluctant smile as he did as well.

---

Thunderclap remained high on the rankings, to many's surprise and awe, having so long seen the same names at the top that it was amazing to see any other remain solidly there too. But everyone now could see it. The new and improved tactics, the strong morale and energy within the team, the improvement of the many members, the increase of the guild and its activity, the ever increasing amount of silver being added to avatars, and how each avatar seemed to have a lot more skill points because equipment shouldn't be the only answer to how their avatars' attacks seemed so strong. This was an attribute shared with Heavenly Sword and they all wondered the connection.

Everyone could also see how it wasn't wrong to place an ordinary player who although had beaten Du Ming before, really only had a year of gaming experience on the team. Or to take the unknown Tiny Herb rookie who had never been used in a match and had lost miserably in the Rookie Challenge before. These two rookies were amazing and everyone knew Tang Rou and Qiao Yifan's name now. The future of Thunderclap seemed to be just as bright as their current present surprisingly was as well.

Although they had such a strong presence now, however, only two pro players from Thunderclap were voted into Season 9 All Stars.

That was, of course, Xiao Shiqin and Su Mucheng.

This was amusing to Thunderclap because actually, there had been someone who had quietly transferred in at the beginning of the winter transfer window. It may have been because Thunderclap had so many rookies this season, no one had thought they would add more and thus hadn't bothered to check their team for new updates to the roster. It may have been because Thunderclap added two more no-name 'rookies' to the roster that no one really looked into them.

But one of those 'rookies' was God Ye, and technically, had the fans known that God Ye was back in the league, they still had a few days to vote him into All Stars because he was now eligible as a pro player. And there were certainly enough fans of God Ye to be able to rush-vote him in even in such a short amount of time.

But unfortunately for them (and fortunately for Ye Xiu), the name added to the Thunderclap roster was Ye Xiu. And since Excellent Era's management were all new, the old having left for more lucrative and stable jobs after the old Excellent Era's fall, no one at the new Excellent Era run by Xia Zhongtian and captained by Qiu Fei knew about Ye Qiu's 'name change' to be able to send a Weibo or public *something* that Ye Qiu now went by Ye Xiu instead of his 'pen name'.

And because Ye Xiu had addressed his ID problem from the very beginning of his retirement, a full year back, at a moment when the old Excellent Era had been rejoicing and thought that he would never come back so never bothered to announce that it was a pen name and at a time when the Alliance also thought that it was inconsequential and so forgot about it as soon as the mistake was secretly fixed and changed....



No *one* except Thunderclap knew that God Ye's real name was Ye Xiu and the Ye Xiu of Thunderclap was God Ye.

Not anyone from Excellent Era - both old and new. Not Liu Hao who had been bought by Conquering Clouds or any of Ye Xiu's former teammates who had all been bought and scattered into other small teams. Not any of Ye Xiu's pro player friends. Not even Chairman Feng who nearly had a heart attack that day and thus resolutely resolved to forget about this greatest blunder of the Alliance as soon as the contract name and ID number were changed and it was over.

And Ye Xiu was not going to fix that anytime soon.

Because it was funny.

And also because he didn't want to go to All Stars as an All Stars or get called in the Rookie Challenge. He knew enough about his popularity and luck that it *will* happen so until Season 9 All Stars was over at the very least, he was going to pretend that God Ye didn't come back from retirement and just chill in the VIP audience seat that Heavenly Sword had generously offered him.

Thunderclap was extremely amused.

Although it would be great to be a team with three All Stars, the club let God Ye go after his moving story of the horror of being targeted by seven rookies and how it would negatively affect his morale when the regular season resumed. Not likely, they all knew how professional God Ye was, but they decided to pretend to be convinced this time.

And the team unanimously decided to help their pitiful new teammate escape the horror of All Stars so they kept the secret. Well, it was also because it was amusing how no one seemed to know that God Ye was God Ye yet. To them, it was one of the biggest jokes of Glory history. Who knows how many pro players and fans still search for news of him and his return everyday since the day he had retired? Too many, and yet no one seemed to know that he was already back.

And so, Ye Xiu escaped yet another All Stars, avoided drama and confrontation with pro players still wanting to know where he went after retirement, and played with Heavenly Sword players in the free time afterwards. It wasn't the first time. After he got Wei Chen to join Heavenly Sword, the old veteran soon came back to him and asked to help him train (beat up) the team of naive and ignorant rookies. After a single beatdown where none of them was able to even touch the sleeve of Lord Grim's clothes, Heavenly Sword under their retired pro veteran's advice offered to pay tuition for Ye Xiu's coaching matches and training sessions on weekends. It was a good price for two hours and he always did like to see his juniors work hard and grow so he accepted the offer and they did that ever since the week that Wei Chen had become one of them. It was a relaxing and fun time. He got to meet Sun Zheping and see the improvement of that team before Ye Xiu finally left B City happy.

---

Of course, not everyone was fooled because again, some people knew that he was Lord Grim and that he was with Thunderclap so even if the newspapers didn't report it, they eventually did check the official roster, wondering why they hadn't heard news of their senior yet and wondering if this meant he was going to join Season 10 instead.

They, of course, found Ye Xiu and Lord Grim on the Thunderclap team roster instead of Ye Qiu and Lord Grim.

Okay, even if some people knew that God Ye was Lord Grim, some were still fooled.

**Huang Shaotian:** Old Ye Old Ye Old Ye! I think the Alliance messed up your name! How cheap are they to not hire editors?! Or unprofessional to not double check their work?! That's a basic necessity to all professional writing! Actually, how stupid are they to be able to spell your name wrong after so many years! Who the fuck is Ye Xiu? What idiots! Get it together! Now people are going to think that God Ye's just another new rookie- Fuck! Hahahaha, you, a rookie! The great Glory Textbook is going to be thought of as a rookie! Those who still don't know you're Lord Grim are going to be in for a big surprise if they think you're just a rookie next game! Who's your next opponent? Radiant!!! YESS!!! None of them even know your face!! Even if you finally decide to show up, they won't know! Take a picture of their face after your first match for me! Wait, no, you don't even have a phone! Su Mucheng- no, I'll ask Xiao Shiqin for it! I can't wait! This is the best typo ever!

**Ye Qiu:** Haha

**Huang Shaotian:** Don't tell anyone! I won't tell anyone too! I want to see the look on their faces when they realize that the rookie they're against is really an ancient god! Do not tell anyone and spoil my fun, Old Ye!!

**Ye Qiu:** Haha

**Huang Shaotian:** I'm serious!

**Ye Qiu:** Okay

**Zhang Xinjie:** ...Senior? Are you really not planning to come back to Glory? Also, do you have a family member who is also good at playing Glory?

**Ye Qiu:** Why do you say that?

**Zhang Xinjie:** I was 95% certain that you were Lord Grim, but the official roster says Ye Xiu is playing him and it is not likely that the officials inputted the information wrong. Is Ye Xiu your brother? Was he the one playing Lord Grim? Or, was it you, but you gave him the account card for him to use for his pro debut and career?

**Ye Qiu:** Hahaha, I can sense that you have a lot more questions, but keep guessing ;)

**Wang Jiexi:** ?

**Ye Qiu:** Yeah!

**Wang Jiexi:** .....

**Wang Jiexi:** That answers none of my questions. Are you not returning to Glory? Who is Ye Xiu?

**Ye Qiu:** Well, you didn't ask any so I thought you only wanted an answer! But these, now, are very good questions. Who is Ye Xiu? A typo? A relative? A legendary twin brother? Coming soon... Wait until the season resumes to find out!

**Wang Jiexi:** Senior.... [helpless vaccaria in a daycare apron and surrounded by many chaotic little ducklings]

**Ye Qiu:** Oh! Did the pro avatar sticker pack for our QQ group update? That's a very accurate depiction of your Tiny Herb nursery! I like it!

**Wang Jiexi:** .....

Of course, not everyone was confused or fooled. There was, of course, a little Detective Conan in the group that always seemed pretty certain of his guesses. Ye Xiu didn't bother with that Detective Conan and, like every black silhouette in the comic, admitted the plot. Well, not everything. Detective Conan could try a little harder haha.

**Yu Wenzhou:** [screenshot of Team Thunderclap's official team roster on the Alliance website; Ye Xiu - Lord Grim is highlighted]

**Yu Wenzhou:** This is Senior?

**Ye Qiu:** Yeah!

**[Ye Qiu changed their name to Ye Xiu.]**

**Yu Wenzhou:** ...

**Ye Xiu:** :)

**Yu Wenzhou:** I'm not going to get an answer from you, am I?

**Ye Xiu:** Nope! But the Alliance should post something eventually.

**Yu Wenzhou:** .....

Ye Xiu could tell that Yu Wenzhou was confused on what he meant by 'the Alliance should post something eventually' among many other things, but he was too entertained by this mishap to explain it.

He wanted to see how long it took for everyone to find out!

---

**Glory Forums > Pro Alliance > Pro Players > Ye Xiu > HE'S LORD GRIM!!!**

**1**

Guys! I just realized! This guy's account is Lord Grim! LORD GRIM IS IN THE PRO LEAGUE!! HE FINALLY MADE IT EVERYONE!!!

**2**

YESSSS!!! I've been waiting this for forever!! I was crying when I thought that he may never come because Soft Mist and One Inch Ash from his party debuted, but he wasn't there, but he's here! Our tenth server legend's finally playing in the league!! It's going to be amazing!!

**3**

I'm so happy too!! I always thought he should be a pro player!! He's so good! Now, I can't wait to see how he compares with the pros though I'm sure he'll do wonderful! Just look at how fast Tang Rou and Qiao Yifan are growing and doing up against everyone! Lord Grim was better so I bet he'll shake the entire Alliance!

**4**

Anyone noticed how his name is so similar to God Ye? Ye Qiu Ye Xiu - imagine if this guy's God Ye's little brother or something! That's so cool! I want to have a Glory legend as a big brother too!

5

!!! If he shows up, then does that mean that we finally might get a hint as to what God Ye looks like?! Ohhh, imagine if they are twins and we can finally know the greatest secret in Glory history!

6

+1 Please be a twin, please be a twin!! I want to see God Ye's face, even if it's only an imitation!

7

+2 I'm so excited! I can't wait until this Ye Xiu guy shows up now!

8

I wonder why he showed up half a season late though? Wouldn't it have been better to transfer in the beginning? What stopped him?

---

And so, Ye Xiu and Mo Fan made their debuts in winter Season 9. Although their opponents weren't strong, they both were greeted with cheers after defeating their opponents.

No one took a picture for Huang Shaotian, but after Ye Xiu's thirty second win, all of Radiant's faces were pale and though they didn't underestimate the 'other' rookie after 'the last one', Mo Fan managed to ease out a win too for his first pro player game.

Ye Xiu had forgot, but he was glad that Xiao Shiqin had the foresight to tell Mo Fan all of the rules so that Mo Fan didn't unintentionally break the one where players couldn't just wait for minutes for their opponents to walk into a trap, but had to move every once in a while.

*That* was why there were two tacticians on the team. They could have each other's back whenever there was something the other miscalculated or forgot.

Thunderclap won 10-0 and everyone was happy. A good start to the rest of the season!

Although the fans were happy too, not everyone was satisfied, wanting to see more of Ye Xiu and Lord Grim, and realizing that they had missed a great opportunity to do so.

---

## Glory Forums > Pro Alliance > Pro Players > Ye Xiu > Our All Stars Failure

1

Ahhhh, why didn't we notice that he was in Thunderclap earlier? I just checked the date that the official team roster had updated and we still had time! We could have voted him in! We could have seen how he would do against *All Star* players instead of players from teams like Radiant! Did you see that slick thirty second win?! He treated the other guy like a noob! I'm sure he would have done amazing against the god level pros too! But now we have to wait... Why do we always find things out late and realize things in hindsight... OTL

2

We really could have. I bet with the entire tenth server and the Heavenly Domain fans, we could have got him at least 24th place. OTL

I want to see how he would do against the top pro players too!!! [child throws tantrum]

3

Thirty seconds! He can't even use a skill higher than Level 20 and he just chain combo-ed the other guy to death with low level skills in thirty seconds! The other guy couldn't even do anything! How is he a rookie?! Ye Xiu's so good!

Wish we could have seen him in All Stars! How he'd fare against the top!

4

+1 Wish we could have seen him in All Stars!

Definitely! This All Stars was good, but so boring compared to the others. I wish he could have been there.

5

+2 All the chaos that we missed...

6

+3 I bet Ye Xiu could make the other pro players cry just as he made the other tenth server guilds did.

**7**

+4 We failed. We failed as Thunderclap and Lord Grim fans. We failed as tenth server players. We failed to be able to see more of Ye Xiu's handsome skills and face. OTL

**8**

+5 This is all the news reporters' faults!! How did they not notice such big news?! How could they not do their job to inform us?! E-Sports Homes, do you not know how to catch the big fish?!

**9**

+6 Yeah! What news was bigger than Lord Grim's debut?! Do your job!

**10**

+7 Yeah!! Even the major pro players are following Ye Xiu's Weibo and writing stuff on his wall! Lord Grim is a big shot! How could you not have noticed his entrance into the pro league?!

**11**

+8 Yeah!! Look at how the major pro players are- Wait, what?

They're writing stuff on his wall? Be right back! I sense something spicy! I want to go read!

---

**Glory Forums > Pro Alliance > Pro Players > Ye Xiu > Ye Qiu? Ye Xiu?**

**1**

Guys, I think there's a connection between these two! Ye isn't that common of a last name! And although he hasn't played in the league yet, trust me - just look at any video fans have taken of Lord Grim in the game! Ye Xiu's Glory skills are so good! Two Ye's, similar names, great Glory skills! Are these two brothers?! Is Ye Xiu God Ye's brother?! Are we going to learn more about God Ye, our great god who had disappeared last year and hasn't come back?! ㄟ\_ㄟ

2

In your dreams. They just have the same last name and are good at Glory. Are you going to say Fang Shiqian, Fang Minghua, and Fang Rui are brothers now? Zhang Jiale and Zhang Xinjie and their outlier brother Zhang Yichun? Liu Hao and Liu Fei? - ew. You're thinking too much, OP. Glory isn't even passed down by blood.

3

No, I think he might be right! I think they might be siblings! I *want* them to be siblings! Please be a twin, please be a twin, I want to see my handsome God Ye's face just once even if it's not the same. I want to see him in the Alliance again even if it's not completely the same. God Ye, where did you go?! I miss you so much! Your fans want to see you again! [cartoon cat wails]

4

No, really. That's even more unlikely. Think about it. Sure, twins are normal, a 1 in 250 chance and the Alliance that has had over 500 players over the course of its history had yet to have a single pro with a twin, but God Ye having a twin and Ye Xiu being *God Ye's twin*? Impossible! God Ye retired because his skills declined! If Ye Xiu was his twin, then he'd be the same age and be declining as well! If they were twins, they would have even joined the Alliance together *ages ago*. Why would Ye Xiu not have joined back then!

And although having siblings is even more normal, if Ye Xiu was God Ye's little brother, why didn't God Ye train him and give him One Autumn Leaf? Look at Lu Hanwen. No matter how old Ye Xiu was then, I'm sure Ye Xiu could have and would have debuted as soon as God Ye retired and succeeded his account if they were siblings and had the same skill!

They're not siblings or twins. It's impossible!

5



Can't you let fans dream a little? No matter what anyone says, I'm believing it. I'm going to believe it. Ye Xiu and Ye Qiu are twins. Ye Xiu is going to look handsome and I'm going to learn that Ye Qiu was handsome too and I'm going to enjoy my fantasy that my two God Ye's are so good and handsome. Ahhh, what if I can't pick and choose between them? My two God Ye's, would you both accept me??

6

Girlfriend fans [look of disgust]

7

No, I'm agreeing with them! I'm going to keep dreaming too! God Ye is a twin! Ye Xiu is his twin! Please please please, all conspiracy gods make my dream come true!!

8

This is no longer a conspiracy theory post, but a wishing well. Oh well, I'll wish it too! Ye Xiu for God Ye's twin!  $\nabla(\geq \nabla \leq *)o$

95

Everyone!! Everyone, look at the broadcast of Thunderclap v Radiant!!! Ye Xiu! Ye Xiu appeared and he's so handsome! My God Ye is that handsome too!

96

He's handsome, I admit, especially because I was not expecting *that* after so long of seeing *Lord Grim* (why is no one changing that poor baby's design??), but I still think that they're not twins. It's unreasonable to say that God Ye has a twin!

158

ASDFGHKKJKL!! Quick!!! Look at Ye Xiu's Weibo!! Look at his Weibo!! I think they might actually be related!! I think they might actually be twins! This isn't about my fantasy anymore! I'm being real! I think they might actually be so! Look at what the other pro players are writing on his Weibo!!

159

No way... You got to be kidding me... What.... [person holding their head; big caption in the background says I cannot comprehend]

160

Oh! You're right! So they are twins? Look at how some of them are asking him why he has the same face as Ye Qiu! Yes! We did it! Our prayers have been answered! It might not be the same as seeing God Ye God Ye, but we get to see a God Ye and his identical twin's handsome face! Our God Ye really was such a handsome boy! I just wish he showed up before he left!

.....Wait... Why are some of the pro players laughing that his name is a typo? Why is Huang Shaotian saying that if he's showing his face now, he shouldn't keep it a secret anymore and use the Alliance's typo as an opportunity to pretend that he's another person? Why is Su Mucheng saying that they should win best partners *again*- Wait, why- Why is Han Wenqing welcoming him *back* to the Alliance- Is he- No way- ARE YOU KIDDING ME?! ARE YOU FUCKING KIDDING ME?! AAAAAAAAAA

160

ALKFFAEFKFIAEEAIOFAWOIEEINRLSLZK

161

Everyone, everyone!! This is not a drill! THIS IS NOT A DRILL!! CHECK THE ALLIANCE WEIBO!! CHECK THE ALLIANCE WEIBO!! CHECK IT RIGHT NOW!! GET OFF THE FORUMS AND CHECK IT RIGHT FUCKING NOW!!!

---

**Glory Professional Alliance V:** Welcome back to the Alliance, @Ye Xiu V! (Note: This is not a typo. Ye Qiu was the pen name God Ye used while he was using One Autumn Leaf.)

**Ye Xiu V:** Thank you for the welcome. I'm glad to be back :)

**Huang Shaotian V:** WAIT, WTF WTF WTF OLD YE!!! OLD YE!!!! DAMNIT OLD YE!! YOU MEAN ALL THIS TIME, YOU NEVER EVEN TOLD ME YOUR REAL NAME?! YOUR OWN ONLY BESTEST BEST FRIEND!? BETRAYAL!! I'VE NEVER FELT SO BETRAYED IN MY LIFE!! THIS RUINS FRIENDSHIPS, YOU KNOW! OF COURSE, OUR BEST FRIENDSHIP IS FOREVER AND YOU CAN'T EVER TAKE IT BACK, BUT YOU ARE SO HORRIBLE! WAIT WAS THAT WHY YOU WERE LAUGHING AT ME EARLIER!! YOU KNEW IT WASN'T A TYPO AND YOU STILL DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING?!!! HOW DARE YOU LAUGH AT THIS SWORD SAINT!! I DEMAND COMPENSATION!!! OLD YEEEEEEEEEE, COME OUT!!! I KNOW YOU USE WEIBO NOW!! @Ye Xiu V @Ye Xiu V @Ye Xiu V

**Chu Yunxiu V:** AAAAA I can't believe there's still secrets you haven't told me, Mumu!!! I can't believe it! I can't believe it! What else are you two hiding?! @Su Mucheng V @Ye Xiu V

**Su Mucheng V:** Welcome back, @Ye Xiu V! Let's win another Best Partners together!

**Su Mucheng V:** Hehe, aren't secrets fun when they're secrets though? [dancing rain gives a secretive smile] @Chu Yunxiu V

**Zhang Jiale V:** Damn! You're kidding me! It's not a joke?! It's really not a typo?! All this time, you've been having us call the wrong name?!

**Han Wenqing V:** Mischief!

**Wang Jiexi V:** Regardless... Welcome back, Senior.

**Sun Haowen V:** God Ye, please warn us next time that the opponent we are facing is not a rookie, but a former god. We, Radiant, were very shocked. (π~~π)

.  
.  
.

\*\*\*\*\*: AAAAA I can't believe it!! He's not just a twin!! He's the same person!!  
All this time, he was the same person!!! Ye Xiu is Lord Grim! Ye Xiu is GOD YE! WE  
CAN SEE GOD YE!!! WE'RE SEEING GOD FUCKING YE!!!

.  
.  
.

It was near midnight, only an hour after a round of the intense matches. But no one, not the fans who had tired themselves out from cheering for their teams, not even the pro players who had been fought in those intense matches, were going to sleep tonight.

---

**Ye Xiu:** Hahaha, I was wondering when someone in the Alliance was going to notice and mention that!

**Feng Xianjun:** Ahem. This is Chairman Feng's secretary. Chairman Feng had to rest in another room for a little while. He wanted me to ask you to tell us in advance when you are planning something though.

**Ye Xiu:** Hehe. You say that as if I'm up to no good, but didn't I rejoin the Alliance normally and give you the right ID this time? Did Zhang Jiale have to inform you when he came out of retirement?

**Feng Xianjun:** [cries]

**Feng Xianjun:** He didn't and yes, this is the case. You did everything legally and normally this time and Chairman Feng or I should have noticed your face or name and realized, but please for the sake of our chairman's health, warn us if you think something like this will ever happen again. Even if you call us at midnight!

**Ye Xiu:** [lord grim is amused] Am I so horrible to plan so many surprises?

**Feng Xianjun:** No! No, you aren't and we know this is unintentional and anything that happens in the future if it happens will be unintentional too, but please, please think of the chairman!

**Ye Xiu:** Hmmm....

**Feng Xianjun:** God Ye? God Ye! You will think of him, right? Please? Please, God Ye?!

**Ye Xiu:** Kidding, kidding. I don't think anything will ever come up again, but okay.

**Feng Xianjun:** [look of relief]

---

**Glory Forums > Pro Alliance > Pro Players > Ye Xiu > Ye Qiu? Ye Xiu?**

**234**

HAHAHAHAHA YOU'RE RIGHT! ALL YOU DOUBTERS WERE RIGHT! IT IS IMPOSSIBLE THAT GOD YE IS A TWIN AND YE XIU IS YE QIU'S TWIN! THEY'RE THE *SAME* PERSON AND I'M SO HAPPY!! I'M DYING RIGHT NOW! GOD YE CAME BACK! GOD YE CAME BACK AND WE CAN SEE HIS BEAUTIFUL FACE!!!

---

**Glory Forums > Pro Alliance > Pro Players > Ye Xiu > Our All Stars Failure**

**128**

WE FAILED EVEN MORE!!! WE ALL FAILED EVEN MORE!! WE COULD HAVE GOTTEN GOD YE TO APPEAR IN ALL STARS THIS SEASON!!! THERE WAS ONLY LESS THAN A WEEK LEFT, BUT WE ALL COULD HAVE VOTED HIM IN!!! IT WAS COMPLETELY POSSIBLE BUT WE ALL FAILED!!!

. . ° ° . ( / ~ \ ) . ° ° . .

**129**

ALL OF US LORD GRIM, THUNDERCLAP, GOD YE FANS ARE FAILURES °°(๖~  
~°)°°

**130**

FAILURES °(°´Д`°)°

131

IT'S ALL THE REPORTERS' FAULTS! HOW COULD THEY NOT HAVE FIGURED OUT SUCH BIG NEWS!! ° ( `Д') °

132

Seriously though. Kudos to God Ye. Not only did he manage to sneak past reporters, fans, and paparazzi for eight years, but he also managed to keep such a big secret among his friends. Did you see that? No one other than Su Mucheng knew! Did no one see his ID or credit card or *something* ever when they hang out and he buys food or cigarettes or something? Is he a freaking ninja?!

133

Right now, I wouldn't be surprised if he were. BUT GOD YE, PLEASE!!! I WANTED TO SEE YOU SO MUCH IN ALL STARS TOO!! I WANTED TO KNOW WHERE YOU WENT AND WHAT MATCH YOU WERE PLAYING IN!! I JUST WANT TO SUPPORT YOU AT ALL YOUR GAMES AND GIVE YOU ALL MY LOVE!!

134

Damn! All the tickets to the rest of Thunderclap's matches this season just sold out! How am I going to cheer God Ye on in the future matches? You can't do this to me! I'm one of his biggest fans! I've been following him since Season 2! If only I just knew that Ye Xiu was God Ye and had faster fingers!! . ° ° · ( / ~ \ ) · ° ° · .

135

Same, upstairs. Same. I wasn't a Thunderclap fan so I never followed them, but God Ye! GOD YE is there!! WHY DIDN'T I REALIZE HE WAS GOING TO BE THERE!! SU MUCHENG'S TRANSFER SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE BIGGEST HINT!!! EVERYONE, I CONVERTED SO PLEASE LET ME IN THE THUNDERCLAP MATCHES (σ ~ °).

136

I'm missing out too. Can only show my love and support from the live commenting section of the broadcasts this season. ( @ ~ @ ` ° )

137

Imagine having seen all the hints and realized that God Ye was Lord Grim and been able to play with him on the tenth server and Heavenly Domain.

Imagine being able to realize that Thunderclap's 'rookie' Ye Xiu was God Ye when Thunderclap's team roster updated on the first day of winter transfer window.

Imagine being able to rush-vote God Ye into the All Stars, return him to the rightful top, spice things up a little, and watch him play on the third day again.

Imagine having known and been able to see God Ye's glorious return to the league and glorious first match live.

Imagine being able to buy the tickets for the rest of the regular season before they sold out and continue to follow and support him live.

I missed and am going to miss out on so many things, aren't I.

( T ∇ T )

138

The tragedy of being a God Ye fan. Not only do you have to always be on the look out, you also have to have hand speed as fast as your god to be able to support him and get everything.

---

**Glory Forums > Pro Alliance > Pro Players > Ye Xiu > Ye Qiu? Ye Xiu!**

1

I can't with this guy! I think he's going to be the only one in history to make the Glory forums have to merge two forums together. Well, now the Ye Qiu forum has become one with Ye Xiu! Though seriously, I can't! He's probably also going to be the only one in Glory history to use a pen name too! I didn't even know you could use a pen name! Who even uses a pen name for competitions! Is he trying to write a novel with his life? [laughs while cries]

2

Seriously! Why take a fake name? And to name himself Ye Qiu? Was he that attached to One Autumn Leaf that he had to make his name matching too?

**3**

Oh my god, don't say that! It makes me feel even worse for him to have to let go of OAL! His baby! They even had matching names, but he had to give it away!

**4**

I think it's ridiculous.... Though imagine Sun Xiang taking on a pen name too and becoming Sun Qiu.

**5**

I- [laughs while rolling]

**6**

Sun Qiu! SUN QIU!!! OMG PETITION TO NAME HIM SUN QIU!!!

**7**

+1 I agree! From now on, let's make Sun Xiang Sun Qiu!!!

**8**

+2 [laughs while rolling] [raises hand in agreement]

**69**

Okay, seriously though, how smart is God Ye? I have to say that if he wanted anonymity, using a fake name really is the smartest thing to do! No wonder why no one ever found him



and figured out what he looked like! His ID and mail and air plane tickets etc. all use Ye Xiu!

He really does plan out everything, master tactician-ing even outside of the game! No reporter or extreme fan would have thought to look out for such a thing in all these years' efforts to find him!

70

Now that you say it, it really does make sense that he's showing his face now! With how he's using his real name, it really is only a matter of time until someone figures out what he looks like because who can get away with not showing their ID or credit card nowadays? Some waitress or hotel receptionist or security guard or cigarette seller would see his name, make a connection, and take a picture to share online someday!

I'm really glad that he uses his real name now! I love Ye Qiu and am so used to it, but we get to see his face now!

71

Yes! His wonderful face! I'm going to have to remove the tags of some of my fanart because Ye Xiu is different and even more handsome than I drew and thought! I'll definitely draw more Ye Xiu to replace them though! I've been getting so much inspiration from replaying his appearances in the game and post-match conference! He's so cute and nice to look at!!

Although his name is different too, I'm glad it was a pen name though and not completely - I don't know - *fake*? I wrote a lot of fanfiction before I moved to drawing, and just thinking of having to change all the Ye Qiu's gives me a nightmare! I would still do it because I love Ye Xiu, but all the names I'd have to change and chapters to reupload!

But it's a pen name and Ye Xiu wanted to be called Ye Qiu at that time so it's perfectly acceptable to leave it as is, right?

Thank God, it's just a pen name!

72

Yeah! I'm going to leave it as is for my fanfiction works as well, but I just have to say- whoever Fire Phoenix Rebirth is - Damn, they're really a fucking goddess! How did they change all their Ye Qiu's into Ye Xiu so fast?! It can't be preemptive because literally the whole world just found out that Ye Qiu is Ye Xiu *now*. But damn, they have over 50 *multi-chaptered* works and who knows how many drabbles and oneshots and everything is already updated! How fast is their hand speed?!

---

"Haha" Ye Xiu laughed when he saw some people begin commenting on Dai Yanqi's social media accounts about how incredibly, *impossibly* fast she was at updating her fanworks. While everyone acknowledged that the action should be impossible because of how incredibly fast it was, it seemed that no one thought the extra step and wondered *how* in the world she did it, just accepting it as a crazy fan author's power to stan her favorite idols. No one thought about how she might have known and prepared beforehand, the thought that an ordinary author, no matter how amazingly good she was at writing, knowing God Ye himself being too world-shattering.

He was sure that it would probably break some more minds if they found out that it was God Ye himself that had done the menial labor of changing all the names and nicknames to Ye Xiu and their nickname counterpart and also had done the labor of reuploading every affected chapter at breakneck speed.

Dai Yanqi giggled as she watched him, impressed by how fast he uploaded everything and warmed by how he really had done it for her. Though she was really even more impressed by how fast he uploaded everything. His reaction speed, hand speed, control, and manipulation worked even outside of playing the game?

It was really impressive how fast he had gone through her folder's files and her story pages on the fanfiction website. Even before she could read the file name, he would have already clicked on the right modified document file as soon as the open file browser appeared.

Although all the documents had been modified and prepared by Ye Xiu beforehand, everyone who noticed and admired Fire Phoenix Rebirth's feat were right to be impressed because what Ye Xiu was doing was still god-like in everything else.

"I love you." She said happily.

Ye Xiu huffed as he continued going through her hundreds of stories. She had written a lot about Ye Xiu, having always admired him from the beginning, even before the day they first met in person. His eyes crinkled as he really saw how much she noticed and cared about him.

"Yeah. Love you too." He said as he finished the stories uploaded before their first meeting and began working on the ones she gifted him and the ones she worked on afterwards.

Having read through them, he knew how much detail had gone into them. How often she thought about his character and portrayed him faithfully, how often she had remembered his preferences, diction, and ways. She remembered so many details and so many stories that he had told her. He also knew by the works how often she really did love him because it showed in her stories in how he was always loved by someone. Cherished and treasured in a way he long had forgotten since Wu Xuefeng and the others who had spoiled him in those first three

seasons had left. Had forgotten since his team slowly drifted away from him and then he found himself alone on the street on a cold winter day.

Of course, there were plots. Schemes and antagonists and conflicts. All good stories had them, but Ye Xiu didn't mind when the novel him ran into trouble or struggled because he found himself enjoying the other novel characters that would protect and defend him. Sometimes, there were conflicts with those people as well. Misunderstandings, conflict of interests, selfishness and disagreements from both sides... But most of the time, there was reconciliation, comfort with the hurt, overcoming faith, and conquering love and he enjoyed it.

He still didn't know what to make of AllYe and HanYe and all the other something-Ye that Dai Yanqi would write, but he enjoyed the love and care found within them. Enjoyed the undercurrent feelings within them that he knew Dai Yanqi had and overflowed with for him. Too much feelings and affection, he thought with fond, warm exasperation. It was easy to see how the number of fanfiction with Ye Xiu as a character and male lead increased almost *exponentially* since the day they first met. Dai Yanqi always seemed overflowing with words for him.

It was embarrassing, but nice.

"Love you too." He repeated softly and she smiled and leaned on his shoulder, unable to help but wrap her arms around his left in a psuedo hug. He had planned to upload everything in an instant to make Fire Phoenix Rebirth even more of a legend, but he slowed in his keyboard and mouse movements so as to not jostle her, now that she was using his shoulder as support and clinging close to his arm. The percussion and clicks of the keyboard and mouse came to a smooth and quiet lull. He still continued, as fast as he could while letting her comfortably rest on him, but everything eased and they continued in that relaxed atmosphere.

QQ, Weibo, the forums, everything was still blowing up, but they long turned off their phones and just enjoyed each other's presence, resting and doing what each other wanted in the midst of chaos. Each other were more important.

## Season 9 (Second Half) and So Forth

### Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

With God Ye's addition to Team Thunderclap, Thunderclap's prospects to win the finals became even higher according to the game analyses and evaluations of many newspapers and commentators. Thunderclap, a once small and somewhat unpopular team, also gained an influx of fans, sponsors, and guild requests. A huge influx.

The club thought that the number of people who joined them and offered sponsorships were high when Su Mucheng transferred in, but the number was even higher when it was revealed that God Ye was in Team Thunderclap.

This was probably because it was also the first time that God Ye showed his face. Already, there was even a bidding auction among everyone to get God Ye's first appearance for their product advertisements.

The club was a little iffy about it, not wanting to force Ye Xiu to do anything, having a feeling of what Excellent Era was like to Ye Xiu and not wanting to be the same especially after how much the pro player had *already* done for them. They also liked Ye Xiu and knew how much he disliked doing anything that wasn't related to Glory and especially these sorts of things, but to their surprise, the famous elusive god just took a look at the stack of papers, sighed, and waved his hand, telling them that it was fine to accept some as long as they were reasonable and didn't take too much energy and time.

They were happy, of course. This would bring a lot of income into the still small and developing club, but they were stunned because he actually accepted to do some! What a miracle! The guy famous for paying fines to avoid press conferences and for dodging *everyone* for *eight years* was now open to *advertisements*.

Of course, if Su Mucheng had been watching, she would have chuckled to herself.

Actually, it wasn't so surprising. Ye Xiu was reasonable and the only reason why he didn't accept appearing before now was because he didn't want to bother his family. Not only because his family was pretty well known among their circle (but his family did eventually somewhat accept it and didn't care about him playing games anymore after the third season), or because he was using a fake ID (that also didn't matter as much because Ye Xiu could have always fixed it as easily as he did now), but also because *he had a twin brother* who had an identical face who would also be mobbed by fans if Ye Xiu showed up. But since that was also resolved with his twin saying that he didn't really care since he didn't go out in public much anyways, preferring home and private restaurants, Ye Xiu didn't have much of a reason to refuse anymore.

He was also immune to modeling and cameras now. This was a side effect from spending summers with Dai Yanqi. Su Mucheng was sure that Ye Xiu wouldn't even blink an eye to whatever costume or prop they gave him or pose they told him to do now. Dai Yanqi was

likely more creative - and Ye Xiu was glad that he made all the girls agree to never share the photos or details with anyone.

He was getting more and more numb to the concept of cosplay as the days went by, but he still didn't want anyone to see that.

It was already enough that two emoticon packs of him existed.

Club Thunderclap really did accept the highest bidder so Ye Xiu's first contract netted the club hundreds of millions of dollars. It was expected that they could finally renovate and improve the club building and stadium infrastructure now. More rooms and computers would need to be added anyways. Although Ye Xiu had less time to be with the kids in the training camp this season, he was popular and quite famous among a lot of kids in W City - many joining the training camp despite the high tuition fees just to listen to him talk. And that was before they learned that he was God Ye.

It seemed that there would be another wave of kids applying for the training camp, even if their skills meant that they might never be a pro player.

Guild Thunderclap was happy. More money meant more computers, paid help, and account cards. More kids at the training camp also meant more workers in the guild because those kids loved to gather material for their favorite teacher and use wild BOSS and other guilds as practice and training material for their tactical courses.

And so, Ye Xiu's joining with Thunderclap once again brought the team and club many things.

---

Season 9 resumed.

To many, it felt like the climax of Season 9 had already passed with God Ye's appearance and name reveal, but it was really only a week after the first match of the second half of Season 9 and there were still many more matches to go.

On the second day, although Thunderclap was once again up against a considerably weak team, the Thunderclap stadium was filled to the brim for the first time in its club history. All the seats were filled and everyone was looking out towards the Thunderclap seating area and stage.

The stadium was thrumming with energy and everyone roared when they saw God Ye for the 'first' time. The real first time didn't count! No one knew anything! Nobody knew!

The difference between Ye Xiu's first reception and 'first' reception was enormous and even Ye Xiu paused for a moment, stunned by the loud, wild cheers reverberating throughout the stadium for him. Unbiddenly, a smile came to his lips and he waved his hand a little. Even more cheers erupted and Ye Xiu was a little embarrassed by their enthusiasm for him.

After all, he wasn't sure he could really do anything for them. This game wasn't going to be as intense as some of the other games going on tonight. For example, the classic Blue Rain v Tiny Herb match going on in G City. Their match was Thunderclap v Heavenly Sword. Wouldn't it be a bit anticlimactic and boring and disappoint all these eager fans?

It wouldn't.

Everyone was just happy to see his face for the first time.

And one of the cameramen did a great job, just leaving one of the cameras at the Thunderclap contestants seating area!

They were so happy to finally see Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng best partners interaction after so long of imagining how good these two must also be outside of the game, so happy to see what their God Ye might be like outside of the game too (and look! They weren't wrong! The team definitely loved him and he them! He was definitely a good person like many AllYe fics had imagined and guessed!).

XiaoYe fans increased as they also got to see the two master tacticians sit very close together and discuss tactics together. A lot of writers were already planning to research when these two could have gotten together, their heads writing up Xiao Shiqin character development stories and how God Ye must have mentored and supported him, causing the young master tactician to take courage, bloom under his comfort and care, and lead his team more boldly into the playoffs! They also began writing some maybe spicy stories of how Xiao Shiqin must have ~~seduced~~ convinced God Ye to come or how Xiao Shiqin must have done his best to take care of the retired fallen god despite his limits and Thunderclap's rather poor conditions and caused God Ye to fall in love and join his team, no one forgetting how random it was that God Ye chose Thunderclap out of all teams to join.

Dai Yanqi giggled, happily choosing to sit next to Su Mucheng instead of Ye Xiu for the time being. She loved writing and reading about her favorite people so she couldn't wait to see the next wave of XiaoYe stories that would be brought about by her captain and vice-captain's unintentionally close seating and nerdy tactical discussions. Well, unintentional on their part! Dai Yanqi on the other hand...

XiaoYe was a very rare pair so who could blame her! She wanted this kind of food too!

Team Thunderclap shook their heads as they watched this. Dai Yanqi, the only person who would scheme to cause very incorrect misunderstandings to form among the fans to get fanfiction written about her captain and her boyfriend being together.

Finally, the time came and the match was beginning.

When the two teams went to the stage to shake hands, Ye Xiu laughed at each of Heavenly Sword's faces.

"You didn't tell them?" He asked Wei Chen who also snickered at his teammates' faces. "Who did they think I was then?"

"Who knows!" Wei Chen laughed good-naturedly as he shook Ye Xiu's hand. He was surprised by the whole name thing too, but not as surprised as his teammates who *hadn't known that this whole time they had been receiving lessons from and talking to an ancient god.*

"A hidden expert...." Lou Guanning said weakly. "Just an old friend of Senior Wei and Sun from the first server....."

Ye Xiu laughed and corrected, "Technically, if I knew Big Sun that way, I'd be a friend from the second server. He and Zhang Jiale weren't in the first."

Heavenly Sword were still shocked stiff and couldn't respond.

"One year..." Wen Kebei whispered in awe and worship. "I've been learning from my god for one year and I never realized it..." He didn't want to let go of Ye Xiu's hand when it was his turn. He didn't want to wash his hands. "We took a group picture together after All Stars..."

As if suddenly remembering something important, Lou Guanning asked, "Will we still be able to receive tutoring lessons from you? Should we pay more?"

He looked like a hesitant, pitiful golden retriever who felt guilty of something but still squirmed and begged for mercy and treats. Ye Xiu found it cute and chuckled. "Sure. I don't mind. It's been fun."

All of Heavenly Sword looked at him in wonder and awe again.

"He said it's been fun... God Ye is having fun with us..." Wen Kebei couldn't stop sounding like a broken record. His teammates didn't berate him, feeling much the same.

Sun Zheping snorted and knocked their heads. "Get it together. We're still opponents this match."

As if remembering, they all snapped out of their daze and Lou Guanning's smile went back to the smile he normally had for his opponents no matter how amazing they were. After all, he was a professional and wanted to be the best, wanted to make Heavenly Sword rise and be the best as well.

"Let's have a good game, seniors."

For the rest of the time, they all greeted each other and shook hands as normal. Though Thunderclap were still amused when they went back to their seats after the customary handshake. Ye Xiu explained a bit and Xiao Shiqin sighed, shaking his head fondly. His senior really couldn't abandon the next generation, always helping them grow even if they be his opponents. So fond of this trait of his kind and gentle senior, he even unconsciously reached out to pat Ye Xiu on the head.

Ye Xiu was a little surprised, but smiled when he looked up and saw Xiao Shiqin's gentle eyes. He was about to tease his junior for treating his senior like this, but the entire stadium shook with squeals, startling them both and then they both, as fellow long since companions

of Dai Yanqi, realized what had happened and been misunderstood and felt twin feelings of exasperation. They didn't even glance at the screen and camera focusing on them, turning instead to their teammates to order the first player for the individual challenge to start walking to the booth.

To show embarrassment or anything that looked like a hint of something more or like there was something to hide was defeat.

Fortunately, his fellow master tactician also knew the ways of many of their fans' minds and also casually continued as if nothing happened.

Of course, it still wouldn't stop the fanworks. Ye Xiu could already imagine all the new fanart and fanfiction being churned out right now.

"Little Dai," He looked exasperatedly at the person who had to be the encourager if not the perpetrator, "you're up."

She giggled, knowing that she was caught but still unrepentant with nothing able to ruin her joy, and bounced up, "Okay! I won't let you down!"

---

After the match, many social media lit up with countless squeals and works of XiaoYe. A QQ group that Xiao Shiqin had almost forgot about @-ed him madly.

Xiao Shiqin looked at the group consisting solely of those who had crushes on Ye Xiu and peeked in the chat. As he had thought, everyone was asking him if they were together, warning him of taking too much advantage of his position as Ye Xiu's teammate and captain, and declaring their rivalry.

Had it been a year ago, Xiao Shiqin would have teased his rivals, knocked them to the ground with his superiority and their jealousy, but now, he knew a lot more and had a lot of time to come to terms with it and knew that their group had turned out to be vain because the one they had liked already had someone now.

He wondered if he should tell them.

All of them genuinely liked Ye Xiu as a person and wouldn't ruin their friendship over jealousy or bitterness. If he told them, he was sure that no one would reveal it to anyone else, much less reporters and social media. Ye Xiu wouldn't get mad at him if he told the semi-secret relationship to the people of this group. They would be disappointed, but they could keep a secret.

He thought about it, but decided not.

**Troubling Rain: @Life Extinguisher @Life Extinguisher @Life Extinguisher** Get out here, you sneaky little mechanic! Confess! What did you do to Old Ye! What is your



relationship! How did you get him to Thunderclap! Get your greasy paws off of him! You don't even have enough money to support him, why are you chasing after him!

**Life Extinguisher:** Hehe

In Ye Xiu fashion, he left a short, unhelpful aggro answer and left.

After all, he quite liked this feeling of having one over the others after so long of being the underdog. And Xiao Shiqin had to admit that he still secretly liked XiaoYe, and the stories and art that was coming in mass waves was admittedly very welcomed and nice.

He wouldn't tell Dai Yanqi that, of course, but XiaoYe really was such a rare pair so who could blame him for enjoying a mass influx of food and well written hypotheticals of their relationship as well.

The QQ group blew up at him, but he muted it, hummed, and went back to scouring the Internet for the fresh new stories of his ship.

He nearly liked something with his official Weibo account, but thankfully, he remembered just in time and switched to one of his alternate accounts to comment and like.

---

The season continued and Season 9 seemed like a race for everyone to the top.

Team Samsara finally seemed to have sorted out their team problem and Sun Xiang mother fans were increasing and crying over the growth of their baby. Just months ago, he was still so haughty even after the event of Season 8 All Stars and the fall of Excellent Era, but now he was actually respecting everyone, treating everyone even the small teams as genuine fellow competitors for the championship, and getting along with his team. Countless photos of Samsara bromance and friendship leaked out from their Weibos and everyone was impressed by the new Sun Xiang - how he had matured and became so dependable and yet so cute at the same time. (Countless fans called him a tsundere, to his annoyance and denial.)

Even Ye Xiu fans who used to hate him for taking One Autumn Leaf's account and their god's position were warming up and were even more happy to see One Autumn Leaf slowly regain its position as an indomitable Battle God in the field. Those who were Dai Yanqi's fans (which was actually a huge proportion of Glory fans and players, especially after the massive improvement to her battle scenes and the World Tournament sequel to the Sanxiu series that every true player of Glory adored) also couldn't help but adore the coordination between Sun Xiang and Zhou Zekai, One Autumn Leaf and a god-level sharpshooter. Sun Xiang and Zhou Zekai were expected to be the next Best Partners among many Glory fans, many thought of them as the reincarnation of Sanxiu, and ZhouXiang was trending - to both Sun Xiang and Zhou Zekai's ire for the latter matters.

**Zhou Zekai:** Senior! Best Partners!

Had Jiang Botao been there, he would have translated that Zhou Zekai was denying the existence of ZhouXiang and saying that he would have wanted to be best partners with Ye Xiu had they had the opportunity.

But Jiang Botao wasn't in the private QQ chat between Zhou Zekai and Ye Xiu.

**Ye Xiu:** Hahaha, yeah, I think you two can be Best Partners too! This season is a little too late, Li Xuan and Wu Yuce has more standing and you both started cooperating too late, but next time! I look forward to it!

Zhou Zekai wanted to deny it and mention again that he would have loved to be Best Partners with his Senior had they been in another world and had the chance, but Ye Xiu said that he looked forward to his and Sun Xiang's Best Partners and he couldn't really deny what his favorite senior wanted.

**Zhou Zekai:** Mm. Best Partners.

Had Jiang Botao been there, he would have translated this as a soulless 'okay...'. But Jiang Botao wasn't there and Ye Xiu couldn't see Zhou Zekai's cowlick flop down in depression, and so, Ye Xiu read it as Zhou Zekai's strong affirming declaration to become Best Partners with Sun Xiang next season. Ye Xiu, both as a senior who liked seeing his juniors grow and as a person who liked seeing battle mages and sharpshooters together, couldn't wait to see it.

**Ye Xiu:** Look forward to seeing you and Sun Xiang together again next season!

Zhou Zekai was depressed for the rest of the day and almost gave Sun Xiang extra training, but he wasn't a captain who abused his position based on his mood so he let it go. Reluctantly.

Sun Xiang felt chills down his spine as he ate chips though and he quietly asked Jiang Botao what he did.

Jiang Botao honestly whispered back that it wasn't what he did, but probably what someone else did.

Sun Xiang jumped to his feet, indignant and claiming that he will beat up the person who hurt his captain himself.

He only gained more glares from Zhou Zekai who had heard that and immediately stood up to protect his crush.

Before any fight could happen, Jiang Botao hurriedly corrected the oblivious Sun Xiang's misunderstanding and calmed his captain down.

And so, Ye Xiu almost unintentionally and singlehandedly broke down the friendship and partnership that he had wanted to see and that Samsara had been painstakingly built up during the entirety of Season 9.

Meanwhile, Team Tyranny was also going strong. Four All Stars, a team with powerful veterans gunning for the championship with tremendous intent. Every detail about their team play and personal styles were being refined and soon, all the imperfections may truly be grinded out, making them the most invincible team in the current Alliance. Even Thunderclap had a hard time with them and suffered a loss in the regular season.

But Team Thunderclap was also growing extremely fast like Team Samsara. They were no longer the same team as years before. The players were improving and gaining experience and combat and tactical awareness fast. The rookies were glowing brilliantly, strong with promising futures that all could see. God Ye and Su Mucheng's coordination was as beautiful as ever, was even stronger - and the tacit understanding between God Ye and Xiao Shiqin and between Su Mucheng and Dai Yanqi were also nothing to disregard. It was possible that these four could also form a strong tactical core of four in the future, possibly even evolving the formula  $1+1$  is greater than  $2$  into a  $2+2$  is greater than  $4$  combo. They weren't always in the team challenge together, Ye Xiu and Xiao Shiqin switching off and Ye Xiu wanting all of the team to continue gaining experience, but when they were, it was an amazing sight to behold.

Not only that, it seemed that the entire Thunderclap was pouring in all their efforts into reaching their peak. The guild was madly gathering materials and hunting BOSS. The R&D department was madly researching silver equipment and making the team avatars more and more scary with their new additions. And the team avatars were already like God-level accounts in a sense. Though they might not have powerful operators and a reputation behind them, they had enough silver equipment to put them at the same level or ahead of many All Star accounts. Not to mention, they all nearly had maxed out skill points. Even the team avatar with the lowest amount of skill points had more than Desert Dust, who was currently thought to be the pro avatar with the highest amount of skill points in the league.

If their investment into the training camp pays off, it was likely that Thunderclap would have a very bright future with these team avatar accounts and the promising trainees with skill, countless experience cooperating with each other in game, and the tactical awareness that God Ye had trained in them. Add in Luo Ji who was always eager to help research maps, skills, and other Glory related things - and the trainees were really becoming very promising.

But right now was the present, and the present Thunderclap was already still very troublesome and scary.

Seeing the current Thunderclap actually made many people wonder what had happened to Excellent Era because clearly, Thunderclap *thrived* and *soared* with God Ye's presence while Excellent Era's performance had been a mess in God Ye's last few years there. They started to suspect that the things that Fire Phoenix Rebirth and some others who had followed her in the trend of evil Excellent Era fanfiction were real, not just OOC twists and plot devices for the story, but actual very real depictions of what could have happened to cause God Ye to decline and retire and go to another team.

Liu Hao always tried maintaining a good public image, but it was hard when people started scrutinizing and analyzing the events of the past with now such a clear picture that God Ye wasn't declining, his skill and strategies were still as badass and amazing as ever, and he could help a 'weak' team grow into a team they all had already thought was championship quality even without the championship trophy.

Fire Phoenix Rebirth happily continued writing evil Excellent Era fanfiction. Ye Xiu looked at Dai Yanqi in exasperation and just asked to keep Qiu Fei and his teammates out of it. They were good kids who needed all the support as they went through Challengers.

Dai Yanqi easily complied.

She had already made fanfiction of the first Excellent Era team that was filled with wholesome, heartwarming fluff while they valiantly strived to make their three championship legend. A side story in the Sanxiu series also endeared the original team to large audiences with its immense amount of hurt/comfort as they helped the grieving novel Ye Xiu cheer up and take care of little Mucheng and comatose Su Muqiu with him. (It was half a true story and when she heard Ye Xiu talk fondly of his old team, she had already long decided to make enormous gift packages for each of them to give out when they come to their wedding.)

And the new Excellent Era already got all of her support. All anyone would see of them in her fanfiction were adorable babies that needed to be protected or little, hard-working apprentices of God Ye, strong, awe-inspiring phoenixes who would raise Excellent Era from the ashes and ignite the team and faltering fans' spirits into flames with the original, true Excellent Era spirit they held fast to, and promising, worthy aspirators to the championship.

Liu Hao and the others though- eh. Maybe she *could* write a redemption fanfiction, but she didn't want to. None of them were getting her acknowledgement or like in this life.

How dare you hurt my God Ye! She didn't quite write that in her fanfiction, but the tone was there. She had a fictional army of Ye Xiu protection squad members and she was not afraid to use it.

And although many fans who followed Glory didn't know if the things she wrote were true or not, they loved it and evil Excellent Era fanfiction and the tropes one would normally see in very dog-blooded drama trended to the dismay of those involved in Ye Xiu's forced retirement.

---

Actually, every kind of Ye Xiu-centered fanfiction was trending, as if finally being able to see God Ye live opened some kind of plug and all the brain juices of the fandom was flowing out to water the thirsty fields and feed the hungry people.

This was partly because of Ye Xiu's fun personality, which shone brightly in his jokes and the way he danced around reporters to their dismay, but every watching person's incredulity or laugh. Or shone through how close he was with everyone team, Team Thunderclap not losing out to Team Samsara in sharing team photos and shenanigans on Weibo. He was even close with almost every other team as well. As if the floodgates had been released by Thunderclap's nonchalant pictures and selfies with God Ye, every other pro player seemed to ask to hang out with Ye Xiu after matches and would share pictures of their outings and meals as well. When it seemed like they were having a competition of who can seem closer to Ye Xiu, the ALLYe and other Ye Xiu ship fans exploded and new fanfictions were being written everyday.

Ye Xiu in fanfiction before his first public appearance was still very Ye Xiu, actually. There wasn't much variation in everyone's portrayal of his strength and character, possibly because of the many people who knew One Autumn Leaf back before Season 1 started or the little tidbits and stories that would come out when pro players were asked to talk about him in interviews.

(There was also the fact that some pro players wrote popular fanfiction. This was something she realized after Ye Xiu comforted her when she asked him if she was wasting too much time writing. His eyes twinkled with a laugh when he said that she wasn't the only one and then shared a story of how Wei Chen had once betrayed Huang Shaotian's pen name to him when the little junior had annoyed the old man too much. Wei Chen panicked afterwards and Ye Xiu had promised to never search Huang Shaotian's pen name up or give Wei Chen's blunder away to the junior, but he never said anything about not telling others. He did keep it a secret for a long time however. Dai Yanqi was the first one he had ever told. And while Ye Xiu was happy to remain ignorant, Dai Yanqi was more than happy to search up the pen name and giggle when she found the HuangYe treasure trove. She tried figuring out if any of her other favorite authors happened to be pro players and she had more than a few guesses.)

Although Ye Xiu in fanfiction before his first public appearance was still very real and attractive, after his first public appearance and consecutive appearances, he became more real and attractive as a person and his already large fanbase and the fanfiction archives were thriving with new things everyday.

As an avid reader of all things Ye Xiu, Dai Yanqi was very happy and delighted in all the new foods. Of course, she wasn't worried about the new hundreds of girlfriend fans or compelling couple pairing debates or new moving relationship stories that came about though.

Ye Xiu was still very much hers!

In every way too!

After all, there was still no one who wrote better SanXiu stories than her! So he was not only her boyfriend, but he was also her number one fan hehe.

A few months after Ye Xiu's return to the Alliance, that would actually be the reason why their relationship was found out. Because apparently, even God Ye wasn't immune to rare pair cravings.

Her boyfriend was so cute haha.

Though she had to give him credit for lasting a much longer time than she ever could. One of the reasons why she became a fanfiction writer was because she couldn't stand starving when there was no food for her favorite ships.

She wondered if she didn't feed him all the time, if God Ye would eventually resort to writing fanfiction. The thought made her laugh, but she'd still feed him. Feeding Ye Xiu fanfiction and seeing his happiness in general upon having another story or art or praise in the comments for his friend was much better than feeding him ice cream with a spoon. It never failed to awe her how adorably and beautifully happy he could get, the wonder in him much like the wonder he had the first time she declared to him that she wanted to write about them having never diminished at all in all these years.

She loved the fond exasperation that would appear on Ye Xiu's face before he would open his mouth to indulge her antics and allow her to feed him ice cream, but this was something else and it never failed to make her feel like she won a championship each and every time.

She must have never told him that she would never mind if he asked her to write more stories of Su Muqiu, would even adore him every time he did, because so much time since the last time she wrote a story of him had apparently passed and then the incident happened. Well! She never did care if their relationship was discovered and Ye Xiu was so adorable this time that even if she had minded, she would have soon forgave him. Besides, as a fanfiction reader and author, she knew very well that rare pair cravings were so real.

---

When the incident happened, Ye Xiu was collapsed on a couch and suffering from his favorite fanfiction pair withdrawals. It had been entire months since the last Sanxiu story came out! They were all busy with Season 9 and Dai Yanqi was on her evil Excellent Era quest in the little free time she had left so Ye Xiu hadn't expected Dai Yanqi to write anything for Sanxiu... Even if she did have free time, he wouldn't expect her to write it because the Sanxiu series had been finished for a long time now and there were other ships and stories to cover...

But once a person had a really good thing and for so long of a time, it was hard to forget it when it was gone. Ye Xiu thought that he would be satisfied with just one story about Muqiu, would be more than content with the entire series that had now ended on such a good note, would be overjoyed with seeing the comments and fan content inspired by Dai Yanqi's work that once in a while flowed in...

And he had been for a long time, but suddenly, a great withdrawal hit him and he felt miserable like the first day he had stopped smoking cigarettes.

He checked the Sanxiu tag and even the former Sanqiu tag and also the Su Muqiu tag, but there was nothing and Ye Xiu felt like crying. He didn't, of course, it was just an expression, but he now understood the melodramatic way some people would cry out that they were dying after seeing an unchanged archive of their go-to tag.

He understood. He was dying. He wanted to read something with Muqiu so badly.

So caught up with the abrupt but insatiable craving and desire to fill the empty hole in his heart, he poked the last chat he had been with Dai Yanqi on and typed without thinking,

**Lord Grim:** [shy ye xiu peeks out from behind a wall with pleading eyes] @Little Dai? There is no food. [cat-eared ye xiu holds empty bowl in sadness] Feed me? [dog-eared ye xiu rests head on table and stares soulfully up with pleading eyes; his dog tail wags slowly behind him in hope]

(Well, he had thought about it a little. Dai Yanqi should be busy with training and her other stories so he thought he should act cute to make up for being such a bother while she was busy and to increase his chances of getting fed. If he just thought a little more and realized which chat he was *not* in however, he would have saved himself a lot of face and trouble.)

**Troubling Rain:** ??? Is Thunderclap not feeding you well? I knew they couldn't afford you! Although they changed so much, how dare they still not be able to buy you enough to eat! This is abuse! Old Ye, come to Blue Rain! We'll treat you better! Our cafeteria has the best food!! There's all your favorites! Even if there isn't, I'll cook for you-

[Lord Grim has withdrawn a message.]

**Troubling Rain:** FUCK, I just realized! Where did you get those cute emoticons from!? I want them too! What the heck, how are you so cute- HEY!! Why did you delete it?! I wanted to look at them longer! I didn't even screenshot them yet! Since when did Ye Xiu emoticons like that exist?! Old Ye Old Ye Old Ye, tell me!! Send me the pack! I want them so badly!! I demand to have the pack! What other emoticons are there? I want to see!

**Cloud Piercer:** +1 [pleading eyes]

**Dazzling Hundred Blossoms:** +2

**Vaccaria:** +3

**Crying Devil:** +4

**Firebird Messenger:** AAAAAAAA Yes!!! Of course! Of course I'll feed you! Wait one moment and I'll cook up some good Sanxiu for you!! I can't believe you used them! You used them!! I'm so happy I could kiss you-... right... now...? [whispers] Why are they here?

**Lord Grim:** ...[ye xiu is sheepish]

**[Lord Grim has withdrawn a message.]**

**Lord Grim:** Haha, wrong chat?

**Firebird Messenger:** !!

**[Firebird Messenger has withdrawn a message.]**

**Firebird Messenger:** ...Teehee, me too!

**Vaccaria:** ...

**Troubling Rain:** ...

**Cloud Piercer:** ...

**Desert Dust:** ...

**Immovable Rock:** ...

**Dazzling Hundred Blossoms:** ...

**Windy Rain:** ...

.

.

.

**Swoksaar:** ...

.

.

.

**Firebird Messenger:** You didn't see anything! [firebird messenger waves her hands magically; caption says it's an illusion]

**Troubling Rain:** LIES!!! What are you two doing?! No, what are you feeding Old Ye?! I know your kind! I know this ship! Old Ye, what are you reading?! Let me introduce you to a better ship! I promise there is a lot more good food for it! Don't read anything but our best friendship HuangYe!! It's much better!! I even have some links on me right now that I can recommend-

**Lord Grim:** Don't. I only know YuHuang.



**Troubling Rain:** What do you mean you only know YuHuang?! Let me tell you that Captain and I are not a pair! We really have nothing to do with each other - it's him and Wang Jiexi that are the pair-! Wait, you know YuHuang?

**Lord Grim:** Of course I do. It's a pretty good ship. Do you want to try? I have some recommendations? Well, I actually do have some for YuWang too if you insist. But I think same team pairings like FangWang, LinFang, HanZhang, Double Ghosts, Double Blossoms, ZhouJiang, and ZhouXiang make more sense!

**Rota:** ...

**Doubtful Demon:** ...

**Flying Sword:** ...

.

.

.

**Carved Ghost:** ...

**Angelica:** ...

**Red Leaves:** [wide eyes]

**Windy Rain:** cough cough cough... *choking*, why did I read this while I took a sip of water?

**Bright Blossoms:** ...

**Bullet Rain:** ...!!! Yu Feng, I know you're on another team, but quick! Captain and Huang Shao aren't breathing, what do we do?!

**Blossoming Chaos:** ...Slap them on the back and tell them that they did their best, but it's over.

**Red Leaves:** Wait, is our Captain breathing?!

**Chaotic Cloudy Mountains:** Vice Captain, what about ours?!

**Empty Waves:** Just broke into Captain's room. He'll be fine... physically

**Aweto:** I'm not a doctor, but I think he is!

**Flying Sword:** You need to be a doctor to know if someone is breathing? Call Yingjie over so that Captain can hug him to get through his shock!

**Red Leaves:** Okay!

**Doubtful Demon:** Old Ye, you know ships?!

**Lord Grim:** Of course I do!

**Doubtful Demon:** ...even HanYe, Huang Ye, ZhouYe, PingYe, WangYe, YuYe, FangYe  
...AllYe?

**Lord Grim:** [lord grim looks to the side] Ah, yes, those. I do know of them, but I already have my favorite ship! Well, if it has to be a ship. [lord grim is exasperated]

**Firebird Messenger:** [firebird messenger snickers] But it's more fun if it's a ship! I can also not write it...

Although things had been exciting and chaotic, Ye Xiu had not forgotten his goal and he quickly demonstrated how much he wanted it as a dog would give its paw in advance to shake for a treat.

**Lord Grim:** It's okay if it's a ship! [man salutes to a sailing ship]

He was also quietly grateful that Dai Yanqi sensed his reluctance and the general awkwardness of having to talk about those ships and had quickly offered him a way out of that conversation.

**Firebird Messenger:** Hehe! That's what I thought! Come to my room then! Let's discuss what kind of plot you want!

**Lord Grim:** Okay!

Ye Xiu was fine with just leaving like that, but it seemed like some of that conversation was inevitable and that their dialogue finally woke up some of the others. Before he closed the app and escaped the conversation, he saw Yu Wenzhou type.

**Swoksaar:** Senior? If I may...? What kind of relationship do you have with Dai Yanqi?

Ye Xiu sighed, his lips quirking up a little at how this junior had always been perceptive and straight to the point. At this point, it was probably obvious to those who could connect the dots. Their dialogue could seem like a reader wanting to get food from an author, a friend casually wanting something from another, but there was the way his casualness with Dai

Yanqi went beyond that of close teammates, the way he seemed used to talking to her like this in a private chat, the matching drawing style of their avatar and even Ye Xiu emoticons, the way she said she could kiss him, and the way he easily agreed to go to her, a girl's, room... To those who could read between the lines, these things hinted to a deeper relationship.

Ye Xiu hadn't wanted to reveal his relationship because of the many complications that came with a reveal if it got out to the reporters, but he figured with this circle, it was fine. He could trust them to keep the secret.

And he kind of did owe an answer to some people. He wasn't that oblivious. He did notice, but since they never said anything, he thought it would be fine to ignore it. To pretend to not notice, to emphasize their friendship in his intentions and actions, even how he really did have no other feelings than friendship and a senior's care for them...

Ye Xiu was happy to receive their care and admiration, even affection, of course, but he just didn't share the same depths of feelings. With time, it was probably possible. Yes, love grows with time and interactions so it was possible for him to fall in love irreversibly with these ones. They were good people, extremely good and brilliant people. But they were on different teams so there was no time, only around seven days and maybe a summer to physically meet every year.

Well, maybe that would have been enough.

It took a day and many hours on QQ and in the arena and a summer to consider Dai Yanqi's confession, but Ye Xiu also didn't want to address love, which was a distraction among many other things in this competitive sport that already demanded so much of their time, fervor, and attention. The only way to get him to really consider it would probably be to shamelessly demand him to as Dai Yanqi had, Ye Xiu thought with a huff and a smile, remembering how she had brazenly introduced him to her parents and confessed afterwards almost two years ago. So bold. So reckless. So eager. Like a whirlwind into his life, he had thought that day and still thought it now, but he didn't mind the havoc she caused on his emotions and heart.

Ye Xiu thought he could get away with pretending that these kinds of love didn't exist and give his whole heart to Glory and then disappear after he had retired. Almost had, but someone grabbed onto him before he could go.

And since this was the case now, he had someone and accepted and reciprocated their love, he had no reason anymore to leave the other feelings unaddressed.

Ye Xiu was glad that his junior asked in this way. About the relationship he had instead of the ones that he would have had to reject. It was better this way. To let sweet crushes and fanciful wishes gently go and deep friendships and rivalries and the other relationships they had that were just as good and true remain. He didn't like the thought of rejecting so many people so this was much better because, even if he didn't like a public relationship reveal, he would always admit it.

Without hesitation, his fingers typed!

**Lord Grim:** Together!

**Lord Grim:** Anyways, I'm heading off.

**Dancing Rain:** Ah! Can I go too? I have withdrawals too! [dancing rain pleading face]

**Firebird Messenger:** Sure! My room's always open to you two!

The three left, leaving silence and then an uproar in the QQ. Those who still hadn't had any feeling or realization typed in the group in shock, those who did but still hadn't thought it was possible were also exclaiming and asking many questions, wondering if it was some kind of illusion or prank or how it had ever happened. Many exclamations, discussions, and begs for the story appeared across the QQ, but the three in the know really had left and Thunderclap, having not gotten the story yet and unsure whether they were allowed to share what they did know, remained in solidarity silence.

But regardless of whether they talked or not, the QQ and even private chats raged on.

Many of the female pro players group were a little disappointed that their favorite ships weren't real, but they soon forgot that to instead speculate and chatter about how YeDai happened and how it was cute how Ye Xiu had read fanfiction and sought Dai Yanqi for it. In addition to the story of YeDai, they wondered about Dai Yanqi's fanfiction author pen name. There were so many questions and they were all engaged in these latest pieces of gossip and mysteries. Chu Yunxiu contributed a little to the discussion, but had to separate herself from her phone sometimes to stop herself from spilling the secret. She promised, she reminded herself. Swore on her dramas to keep things secret and it was still valid even now because Ye Xiu and Dai Yanqi hadn't said anything or seemed to indicate that they will say anything at all. But she was still squealing at how adorable this couple was and definitely how cute Ye Xiu was in the beginning. She knew he liked emoticons and just his regular usage of the normal ones was cute, but she never thought he would use the Ye Xiu emoticons! The power was devastating!

Meanwhile, another private chat - the group with those who had crushes on Ye Xiu - also chatted. Though there were a lot of questions and speculations and laments too, it was a lot more subdued than the other QQ groups. Xiao Shiqin was, of course, @-ed. This time, Troubling Rain who had @-ed him was much more quiet. He startlingly only said one sentence.

**Troubling Rain:** @Life Extinguisher Since when?

But Xiao Shiqin was more open to being interrogated now. He thought about the couple on his team and admitted.

**Life Extinguisher:** I'm not certain. They had never explicitly said that they were together until now and we had never asked though the signs were all there. If I had to guess, then it would be around the second half of Season 7.

**Swoksaar:** The Thunderclap v Blue Rain match.

Yu Wenzhou suddenly typed and Xiao Shiqin nodded. That was the earliest, clearest memory he had of a sudden change in Dai Yanqi's behavior. Xiao Shiqin could feel Yu Wenzhou's exasperation as the Blue Rain captain reluctantly remembered that match that had been a nightmare for Blue Rain and also Tiny Herb because of all the YuHuang, YuWang, and WangHuang that was spread about.

Now that Yu Wenzhou thought about it, although he had entreated Ye Xiu to not look at the match or look up the terms, Ye Xiu had probably knew all about them and many other ships back then.

Though it was not likely that he was the direct reason why Dai Yanqi had thought to use BL as a distraction technique in matches. Ye Xiu probably had a good laugh, but if Yu Wenzhou would guess...

(One thing good about being a master tactician and known to type relatively slow was that everyone waited on him to finish typing.)

**Swoksaar:** Although it is hard for most to meet Ye Xiu, it is not impossible, but Thunderclap had no matches with Excellent Era in the beginning of the second half. They most likely had met somewhere by chance during winter break. Sometime in their acquaintance, Ye Xiu had likely offered Dai Yanqi training lessons and some incentive to do her best to win her matches.

Yu Wenzhou didn't have to say any more on that. All of them could remember the latter half of Season 7. Some of them were even victims of the havoc caused by a very eager rookie in the team challenges. While they did understand now because quite a few of them would have done the same and not only done their best but did *anything* to win depending on the incentive that Ye Xiu had offered, it had still been quite terrifying.

And memorable. Dai Yanqi had improved startlingly fast during Season 7 and 8, enough that she had been compared to the known geniuses Sun Xiang and Tang Hao of her same generation.

Her growth would make sense if Ye Xiu had personally helped and trained her. This guy... He was really soft to his juniors.

**Swoksaar:** I also do not have an idea on when they got together, but it was certainly around or before his retirement. I had been wondering why he went to Thunderclap.

**Life Extinguisher:** It wasn't me.

Xiao Shiqin easily admitted. At that time, Xiao Shiqin had been considering leaving Thunderclap for a better team himself. How would he come to think of suggesting to God Ye to come and join his team? God Ye wanted the championship even more than him. He hadn't known anything about Excellent Era back then so he had still thought that Excellent Era was better so why would he invite Ye Xiu to Thunderclap which was less reputable, poorer in many ways and things.

It was Dai Yanqi, and Xiao Shiqin could still remember his surprise when she told him that Ye Xiu wanted to come. He hadn't believed it, he had been so excited that he didn't think of asking or wanting to break this dream, but honestly, that was when he should have realized that those two were together. Huang Shaotian was Ye Xiu's friend, but even he wouldn't have been able to convince Ye Xiu to join Blue Rain after so many years of friendship. That Ye Xiu came to Thunderclap was akin to a miracle. There had to be a deeper reason.

After soaking in the information for a while, contemplating things a little more, thinking and reflecting in silence, Huang Shaotian asked,

**Troubling Rain:** Is he happy?

They had been former rivals. This had been quite a harsh blow, but Xiao Shiqin smiled that it was as he had thought. They all really cared about their senior and now former crush. When he had realized that Ye Xiu and Dai Yanqi were together, he also had felt blindsided and hit by a bat, but he couldn't hate how happy those two were. A little disappointed and jealous and longing, but he was happy to see him happy even if it was with another and his happiness helped him come to terms with the matter.

It was too bad that he couldn't be with Ye Xiu in that manner, but they were still teammates with the same interests and goals, companions and partners, close friends- and Xiao Shiqin enjoyed that too.

**Life Extinguisher:** Yes. He is very happy.

## **Troubling Rain:** Good

Many others echoed the sentiment, the people of the chat giving the feeling that they were stretching and letting go, releasing the 'what could have been's and reminding themselves of what they still had and cherished and loved.

It helped that Dai Yanqi was a girl and not a rival that had been on this chat. They had infuriated each other quite a lot in the past and had one of them been the one to get Ye Xiu, that person would have definitely gloated here and the others would have definitely given the winner a hard time in the matches, even planning the biggest smackdowns they could manage in the regular seasons to vent out their anger on them.

But Dai Yanqi wasn't on the chat and she definitely didn't show off or eat dog food in their face so it was a lot easier to have mercy and release their other negative feelings on the matter.

The group disbanded.

Well, not before someone asked if anyone took a screenshot of the message that Ye Xiu had deleted.

Even if they had decided to give up on their crush, they still were very much in love and the feeling would probably linger a little longer. Though even after it faded, it might be forever that they would think that those emoticons were very cute.

Fortunately, someone had taken a screenshot and since they weren't rivals anymore but rather all victims of a failed love, they generously shared it with the group.

---

They weren't the only ones.

**Firebird Messenger:** Can I still get that message you accidentally sent to the pro players group? [firebird messenger pleading eyes]

But although there were definitely screenshots circulating everywhere, Ye Xiu still typed every word out for his girlfriend instead of download a copy and send.

**Lord Grim:** [shy ye xiu peeks out from behind a wall with pleading eyes] **@Little Dai?** There is no food. [cat-eared ye xiu holds empty bowl in sadness] Feed me? [dog-eared ye xiu rests head on table and stares soulfully up with pleading eyes; his dog tail wags slowly behind him in hope]

**Firebird Messenger:** Yay!! I will, I will feed you! Thank you, Ye Xiu!!

**Firebird Messenger:** Hehehe, you're so cute [ye xiu and dai yanqi hugs; lots of hearts float out of them]

---

Later, when Dai Yanqi realized why the two had withdrawals, a reason that was unconsciously deeper than just having not read a story with their late brother/friend for so long, she also gave them both hugs in person.

It was almost Qingming Festival. Normally near this time, they would be in H City, thinking about him until they visited his grave on Tomb Sweeping Day, but this year, they were in W City.

Well, Ye Xiu had been in W City last year during the second half of the season as well, but he had also flew back to H City just for this day. And this year, they had almost forgot until a part of them ached and caused them to think of him.

Dai Yanqi was a little happy that her stories were filling the holes in their heart and helping them move on and also with emotion with them as they quietly contemplated this matter. Watching them, she promised to set the day in her calendar and help them remember though she was sure that they would never forget it again even if they were so happy and busy in the rest of the years of their life.

They smiled, thanking her.

She also asked if she could visit his grave as well, and so, the three of them booked tickets for a day trip to H City.

Of course, Dai Yanqi still wrote a story for them. The Sanxiu series was finished with their childhood story as the prequel, the alternate universe where Su Muqiu lived and played with Ye Xiu in Excellent Era as the main story, the World Tournament as the sequel, and the first Excellent Era's interactions with Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng as the side story, but that didn't mean that she would ever stop!

Especially when she realized that she hadn't told Lord Grim's story yet. Ye Xiu was surprised but more than happy to share the stories that compiled the creation of Lord Grim and the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella. Su Mucheng and Dai Yanqi laughed at their double autumn antics, the guilds that suffered, and the amount of resources that went into the expensive unspecialized baby that would be shelved for years until he could finally show his worth and make his mark in Glory.

While they were happy with telling Lord Grim's story and writing that as the next in line for the Sanxiu series, Su Mucheng also shared stories, other stories of Su Muqiu, and Dai Yanqi happily listened as the two reminiscence the past.



---

They brought the printed doujinshis with them to the grave. Birds of paradise and five books with beautiful art covers, some drawn by Dai Yanqi's many fans. Ye Xiu laughed when he placed the second and third books against the stone.

"Look, Muqiu. We won the championships together. Dai Yanqi even made the trophies 24 karat gold. The real trophies aren't even that pure, but you finally have 24k gold to sell."

Dai Yanqi couldn't help but give a small laugh, emotion warming her amidst the chilly weather of morning spring. "Would he really have sold them?" That was the trophy that everyone wanted to attain, keep, and boast about, you know.

Su Mucheng laughed as well, rubbing her eyes. "He would have. He totally would have sold them." Her brother was practical, cared more about money than keepsakes. After winning the championship, he would have waited for the price to inflate and then sold it against Tao Xuan's wishes. Ye Xiu would indulge him and at that time, she would have been laughing at his side as well.

"He totally would have sold them." She repeated as they set the final book, the story of Lord Grim, down. All of that story was true so it had been easy to write, quick to print, and bring to his grave.

With that, the series probably was completely finished. There would be more stories, she was sure, Dai Yanqi and her 'male original character' had so many fans who would produce content every once in a while, but her brother's story, even his alternate universe adventures, was told.

They gazed down at the grave with emotion, warm and inexplicable. Who knows how long they had been there until they all went to walk around H City, Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng offering to take Dai Yanqi to all their past haunts. Many places changed, many stores changed owners or moved away and were replaced with new, but there were still many things that remained the same and Dai Yanqi looked at these ordinary streets and buildings with appreciation.

Her friend and her boyfriend's home city. She could imagine the three kids walking through them, two orange-haired siblings and a runaway young master they picked up. They talked and laughed after walking home from the Internet café, account cards in pockets, maybe groceries in hands, and dreams and life in their bright eyes.

They left the flowers and books behind on the grave in Nanshan cemetery.

---

It had been whimsical, probably not a good idea, but neither of them were entirely bothered when it just so happened that another person who happened to both love Glory and also planned to visit a grave that day passed by, saw it, and then posted a photo of it on Weibo.

\*\*\*\*\*: Guys, guys!!! I just saw this!! OMG I JUST SAW THIS AND IS SU MUQIU REAL?! [photo of Su Muqiu's grave with birds of paradise and five doujinshi books laid out in front]

Weibo exploded.

---

Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng were just glad that Chen Guo happened to be visiting a grave that day as well and when she saw someone trying to take something from a grave in a very suspicious manner, she stopped it. And since she had known about the Sanxiu series as well because almost every Glory fan knew it by now if only for the amazing battle scenes and team analyses and world tournament concept in the second and third parts, she had made the connection as well and called Tang Rou to ask Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng about it... and if her speculations were true, what to do.

It had been the first time in a long time since Chen Guo and Ye Xiu talked and Chen Guo was still stunned that this guy (this guy!) was God Ye though she was happy for him and became a Thunderclap fan to follow her original idols and her friend who was now one of them.

Ye Xiu was obviously still the casual person he was since back then though, and after some discussion with Su Mucheng and Dai Yanqi, they all told her that she could keep them. Even told her that they'd drop a visit to Happy Internet Café to sign them for her if she wanted in thanks for thinking of Su Muqiu and protecting them.

Chen Guo nearly dropped her phone. The books were still cradled protectively in her other arm, but she nearly dropped her phone. Su Mucheng was in H City again! Su Mucheng was going to visit! Su Mucheng was going to sign an autograph!!

"Yes!!" She shouted, wanting to meet them and get a signature from her long since idol. Chen Guo was a little embarrassed afterwards, realizing that she might have sounded like the greedy fan she just stopped, but the three laughed and seemed okay with it, telling her to let her know when she returned to the café. Chen Guo was touched that they realized where she was and thought of her, told her to take her time and not rush. They would wait for her to finish visiting whom she wanted to visit in the cemetery.

Although a part of Chen Guo did want to rush, she did take her time, happily telling her father about the unknown god who wandered into her Internet café one day and left after working for a month. An amazing person that she happened to meet and she was sure that he would go on to do more amazing things. As her hands gripped the books, carefully but tightly, she also told her father about how she thinks a lot of the stories in the books were real and she didn't think that Su Muqiu had a happy end as he had in the series, but she thought he was still amazing. Both his sister, her idol, and his friend, someone else she also looked up to, were so strong and amazing - and he. Her father was resting in the same place as a really amazing and well loved person as well.

After talking a little more, she left. And once she left the cemetery premises, she did rush because she wanted to meet them so badly.

Ye Xiu huffed in amusement when she appeared at the Internet café with tousled hair, breathing as if she had just ran a marathon. Yes, this guy was still so infuriating. He also gave her a cold bottle of her favorite drink, freshly bought and taken from the fridge. So infuriating! (He still remembered! Her god still remembered her!!)

Chen Guo was going to squeal so she quickly led them to her home upstairs and then screamed delightedly there, happily thanking them for coming and asking Su Mucheng and them if they wanted anything to drink or eat. Su Mucheng was amused, but welcomed her excitement and answered all her questions. Even said that there was no need to be so courteous because Ye Xiu's friend was her friend. Although she wasn't exactly sure what to make of being that guy's friend, Chen Guo was so happy. She was friends with her idol!

They talked and caught up, signed autographs and even played Glory together in one of the private rooms of the Internet café. It was the happiest day of Chen Guo's life - especially when she realized that Fire Phoenix Rebirth was Dai Yanqi and she got to meet the person who wrote the series! While she also realized that Dai Yanqi was that girlfriend who came to visit Ye Xiu that day, Chen Guo did not fail to tease her former game-addicted employee for being roped to do things other than playing the game, even roped into editing various fanfiction on him being shipped with other people. Ye Xiu was immune, having long come to terms that his girlfriend really liked fanfiction and also liked AllYe and other ships. Dai Yanqi giggled, happily hugging her supportive boyfriend's arm.

Chen Guo was once a YeCheng fan before the fandom realized that Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng were like siblings and they mostly stopped shipping the two, but now she was really impressed by YeDai. It was a rare pair, almost unheard of, and had someone mentioned it to her, she wouldn't know what to think of it, but now she thought it was pretty cute. She liked it. She was a fan. And it had been a while since she wrote something because again her original ship had sunk when Ye Xiu began appearing and interacting brotherly to Su Mucheng, but Chen Guo's fingers itched as she thought that it was a waste that no one knew about this rare, *but true* ship. Which was pretty cute. She might write pick up her keyboard again.

"Thank you for caring for my brother." Su Mucheng repeated and Chen Guo's eyes stung as she remembered the topic that they had temporarily avoided.

"It's fine." Chen Guo said, waving her hands. She got a little angry in remembrance though. "Some people can be so rude! Coveting from the dead and taking things from graves!" She remembered that she was the one with the books now and was a little flustered, "I mean, if you didn't give me permission, I would have definitely left it there and defended them!"

All three of them laughed and Chen Guo was a little more flustered, but Su Mucheng held her hand gently, her eyes bright as she said with full conviction.

"We know."

Chen Guo was touched by her full trust. Although Ye Xiu knew her, she was still a stranger to Su Mucheng and yet her idol believed her. That she would not have stolen anything from the grave even if it was the most precious treasure in the world.

"That's why we thank you." Su Mucheng said and Chen Guo's cheeks blushed at the earnestness, the warm sincerity in her idol's eyes as she looked at her.

"You're welcome." She said, looking down at the five books, stacked carefully on the table and away from their drinks and snacks. "So they really are...?"

Always understanding, Ye Xiu nodded. "The first one is about 85% true." His eyes were soft with warmth and sentiment as he recounted, "The second and third are not though I still believe his skills and our coordination would have been like that, and the fourth is about 90% if you ignore all the times Muqiu is mentioned and appears." Because he died instead of lived and remained in a coma. "The fifth one is completely true though. 100%."

Chen Guo gulped. There was no fifth part of the series in Fire Phoenix Rebirth's archives. It was likely that it was just recently written. Unpublished, unreleased content, a new story that no one but them knew. And she had the only copy. That story that no one knew yet was in her hands.

Chen Guo was moved with emotion. She also wondered what the story was. A 100% true story. Part of the series with their friend and brother. What was it about? She wanted to read it.

She was bubbling over with the energy and impulse to ask and Ye Xiu laughed knowingly. Infuriating scoundrel. "It's Lord Grim's story. How Su Muqiu and I made the Myriad Manifestation Umbrella."

Chen Guo's eyes widened. She had with her-

"It's probably a good thing that you picked it up actually. It shouldn't be released until after I retire because it has all of the silver weapon's development history and stats."

She had with her the blueprint to Glory's best and most mysterious silver weapon!!!

"I will lock it up in a safe so no one steals it!" Chen Guo blurted out, "After I read it, but I'll keep your secrets safe!"

Ye Xiu laughed again, they all did at her energy, and though it wasn't likely that anyone would even know to steal information from an Internet café owner, Ye Xiu went along and didn't embarrass her too much. "You don't have to go that far, but thanks. Keep it until the day it gets released."

Chen Guo nodded vigorously, excited to read it at night.

The day was getting darker. Chen Guo looked worriedly at the window and asked, "Do you three have a place to stay at night?"

"It's fine." Ye Xiu chuckled, "We were going to leave tonight. We just planned a day trip since we still have training to do." Of course, the season was still continuing, Chen Guo remembered. They were likely just here to visit the grave. "Besides, do you have room for three?"

Chen Guo paused uncomprehending until she just remembered that there was already a new employee who had moved into what had been Tang Rou's room. Only the storage room was free and she would be embarrassed to even suggest it to Ye Xiu, much more her other idols who were female and deserved better rooms.

Knowing that the storage room was what Ye Xiu was thinking of as well by the laugh in his eyes, and also not wanting to show it to Su Mucheng her idol, she got angry and shooed him away, "Go, go! Don't let me keep you three for too long! It's already so late! Get safely to the airport!"

Ye Xiu laughed. Su Mucheng and Dai Yanqi smiled. They all left after some last words and greetings. And then Chen Guo realized. Although Su Mucheng probably still didn't know, Dai Yanqi probably did, having visited Ye Xiu once. Ahhh, someone else knew her embarrassment, how she placed God Ye in a small dusty storage room before!

She buried her face in her arms, vowing to never use the storage room as a temporary home for any employee again.

Her embarrassment was only for a short while though because she couldn't help but beam at the new books she got - one she wanted to start reading more than ever.

She hugged them closely and brought them to her bedside table in her room, excitedly wanting to start.

---

While on the way to the airport, Ye Xiu, Su Mucheng, and Dai Yanqi couldn't help but look at their phones. They had turned them off in favor of their trip of nostalgia around H City and then in favor of their pleasant conversation with Chen Guo, but there were no doubt many things that went on while they had been enjoying themselves.

Sure enough, their phones exploded into many vibrations and notification sounds once turned on.

There were still many on Weibo screaming and shouting, arguing and discussing. There was also a lot more photos of the grave circulating. It seemed that Nanshan cemetery was visited by a lot of strangers today.

Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng were comforted by the more rational and sensible fans that were scolding the first fan who had taken the picture, possibly disrespecting their privacy and very rudely intruding on a very sensitive topic, and scolding the other fans that were taking pictures and @-ing them and writing on their Weibo wall for answers and also of course scolding whoever must have taken the books because they had disappeared in the photos of Su Muqiu's grave afterwards. Many people were demanding whoever stole them to bring

them back to the grave. Ye Xiu chuckled because he had a feeling that Chen Guo wouldn't even know such a strong demand was being repeated over and over again on Weibo. She wouldn't know until she finished her new book at least, too distracted from the Internet life. After all, she had turned off her phone too.

Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng was glad for these fans. Without their comfort and care, they might have actually been a little more riled up with negative emotions because Su Muqiu was their friend and brother and it was a sensitive topic and today was also an emotional day.

A little more heartened, they continued reading, curious about what everyone had thought.

There were some debates over whether the first photo was real or not. That had actually been the reason why some more photos of the gravesite had been taken. To prove that it wasn't photoshop. That there really was a grave with someone who shared the same name as a 'male original character', the date of death being the same date as novel Su Muqiu's car accident before he was in a coma, and the gravestone photo of the boy looking so similar to any photo of Su Mucheng. He had orange hair and eyes as well, handsome looks and a bright smile.

Too many coincidences. And some even dug up old newspapers to find that the car accident was very real. Those people had been especially scolded by the more sensible fans that they had, the fans demanding everyone to at the very least stop @-ing them for confirmation on their theories. Why are you showing the newspaper article of a possible beloved relative to *anyone* and asking if it's real? Why are you treating the death like a mystery drama novel and sharing your theories, even if they could be real? People!

There were also people who talked about the original Autumn Tree.

The Sanxiu series had existed for quite a long time now. Many, if not all, Glory fans had heard of it. Even if they were not shippers, the second and third book were especially recommended to everyone because of match commentary and analysis and understanding of each of the pro players and teams better than any newspaper, real life commentary and analysis, and of course Pan Lin and Li Yibo. A few weeks later when Pan Lin and Li Yibo's match commentary significantly improved, many people even teased them on Weibo saying that they had studied the fanfiction back and forth. Neither of them admitted to anything, but Ye Xiu laughed because he thought so too.

The concept of an international tournament was also new and had attracted many people who wanted to see such a thing. Almost everyone was in awe of the dynamics and battle scenes written with the national team of All Stars training and fighting together in the story - and there were many clamored and even started a petition to the Alliance that if this ever happened in real life, please live broadcast the daily interactions of the national team members because they wanted to see it happen in real life. Of course, along with the fierce, valiant battles against the other national teams throughout the world.

Of course, though many people's focus had been on their favorite teams and players or on the battles and game analysis they had never seen or thought of before, no one could forget about the male original character that had appeared in both stories because it was *his* series. Su Muqiu and Autumn Tree were widely talked about. Although many hated original characters, especially those made to be pro player's siblings, believing in 'pure' fanfiction, many people

also couldn't deny being attracted to him and falling in love with this original character who had struggles, fought hard, took good care of his sister and friends, and loved Ye Xiu beautifully. A loyal friend, a trusty partner who always had his side both in game and out, ten years of sentiment, ten years of trust and affection. There were probably no other fanfiction that had more inspired works than the Sanxiu series, many people moved to write more or draw art based on the series.

And of course, there were thus many people who researched Su Muqiu and Autumn Tree, curious about this original character. Dai Yanqi never mentioned his origin or how she 'thought up' the original character despite many people asking, so intrigued by his in-depth settings, but many people found out because although Su Muqiu's name was unknown, there were some veterans who remembered an Autumn Tree before.

That had once caused a fervor among the Glory forums and countless people couldn't stop talking about how Autumn Tree was real! Though they didn't know about Su Muqiu - Autumn Tree at the very least was real and had stood by One Autumn Leaf's side back then! Was also called a Gunner God among many wild BOSS competitors back then! There were countless old videos on the forum. Even posts written by Autumn Tree and comments made by him on some of One Autumn Leaf's posts. He had actually been real.

Many people then wondered what happened to him. Why hadn't he joined Ye Xiu and dominated the pro scene with Ye Xiu in Excellent Era? Where did he go? Did he quit Glory? Many wondered about him and who he was, but although they acknowledged Autumn Tree's existence and lamented like those in Season 1 that he hadn't formed a dual core with One Autumn Leaf in that era, everyone still hadn't thought that Su Muqiu was real. This was because neither Su Mucheng or Ye Xiu ever mentioned someone like that. They also couldn't imagine Ye Xiu of Season 1 having suffered anything because the One Autumn Leaf back then had been so domineering and strong.

But now the topic came up again and everyone wondered. Although many were wary of @-ing Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng because of their protective fans who were currently bristling with defenses, some dared to try @-ing Han Wenqing and Wei Chen. Both didn't even bother to answer. The coldness could be felt through the screen.

(It was also in the QQ. Ye Xiu couldn't help but smile fondly when he saw that Han Wenqing said an 'Enough!' and all speculations and attempts to reach Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng in the QQ by the more insensitive pro players stopped immediately. Honestly, he sometimes wasn't surprised that people shipped him and Han Wenqing.)

Finally, there were discussions on Weibo on who Fire Phoenix Rebirth is. The fanfiction author had already been somewhat of a legend in the Glory circle. Before the Sanxiu series, her works had already been extremely popular. With each story of the Sanxiu series, she became even more popular and reached a goddess status in the circle. She was probably the only author in the fandom that had almost all the people who followed the Glory Alliance read her works too. Because again, the second and third story of the Sanxiu series were revolutionizing and incredibly good. The amount of hits and likes and shares for those two stories were already on a whole other league compared to anything else under the Glory tag.

When the author updated all her works to use Ye Xiu's real name instead, she also became even more of a legend among fanfiction authors because of how fast she did it. Some still talked about how she did it.

Now that discussion was coming up again. Did... the author know Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng in real life? Had they known that Ye Xiu's name wasn't Ye Qiu but was Ye Xiu this whole time and prepared for it? Was the Sanxiu series *real*?

This conversation garnered a lot more conspiracy theories. Because while no one could fathom the idea that a mere fanfiction author knew the (god-like) people they were writing about in real life, there was also so many indications that yes, she did and God Ye might have even helped her write *fanfiction*. *Shipping* fanfiction. God Ye. Actually, was the battle scenes and game commentary and analysis done by God Ye?! That would explain why they were so impossibly, otherworldly good! They possibly had just seen into the mind of a god level player!!

Of course, what had caused even more of an uproar among that line of discussion was again, if it was real or not. If the childhood stories of the prequel was real. If the relationship was real. If Su Muqiu was real.

There were some speculations on whether the author was a pro player or not (with many disagreeing that she was because fanfiction took a lot of time to write and look how many Fire Phoenix Rebirth wrote!). There were some discussions on if the author was Su Mucheng because who else knew God Ye and her history and would write the stories. There were some who cared about how there were five books instead of four at the gravesite and they desperately begged to know what the fifth book was and if they could read it.

But overall, everyone everywhere basically wanted to know if it was real.

Dai Yanqi watched with emotion as Ye Xiu and Su Mucheng finally looked up from their phones and glanced at each other.

Their fingers were shaking a little.

Ye Xiu gave the decision to Su Mucheng.

And Su Mucheng typed after taking in a breath.

**Su Mucheng V:** Thank you to all our fans who took our thoughts and feelings into consideration. This is indeed a very sensitive topic and I would like to ask everyone to take down all the speculative posts and photos of his grave.

It is true that Su Muqiu was never an original character, but was my real brother, someone Ye Xiu and I cherish and dearly miss. It is also true that many of the stories were real. As Ye Xiu had said to someone earlier, the first story is about 85% real, the fourth 90%, and the fifth 100%.



You do not have to worry about the five books that were taken from his grave. We have given them to that person and we know that the books will be cherished in their new home.

Although you may not have known that he was our real brother and friend at the time, we also wanted to share that we appreciate all the love and consideration you have given to him in your comments, thoughts, and inspired works.

Thank you for all the love you had given to my brother and us and our shared story.

Also, thank you **@Fire Phoenix Rebirth** for offering to write our story and more. We adore everything that you have done and given for us.

**Ye Xiu V:** Yes, thank you **@Fire Phoenix Rebirth**. You have written the story I most wanted to see.

Just that would have been enough to melt Dai Yanqi's heart, but Ye Xiu also turned to her and smiled, adding softly, "and I can't stop loving you for that."

Dai Yanqi should reply, say something back on Weibo, but she couldn't help but hug him, tightly enveloping her arms around him and burrowing into his chest and appreciating his embrace as well, strong, tight, and just as full of emotion and love.

She was just so happy. The story that day that she had wanted to write for him. She remembered how he had been looking for something he thought he would never find and then how he had been so happy, so stunned and happy, when she had offered. She remembered the way he had to restrain his hands to not hug her like this, so full of uncontrollable joy and delight. She remembered how she had thought it was the most beautiful thing and swore to write that story, the story he most wanted to see, the story that would make him smile like that forever.

She succeeded. She already knew she had, but hearing him say it, seeing him like that day all over again and feeling his arms around her, she was falling in love again.

"Ye Xiu, if you have any story you want, just tell me, I'll write it for you whenever you want."

Ye Xiu chuckled as he held her tighter. "You're spoiling me."

"I really will." She insisted, pressing her head further against him, wanting to become one with this person.

He smiled into her hair, "I know." He whispered. "Thank you." It was full of love and sentiment.

She wanted to stay like this forever.

---

**Fire Phoenix Rebirth:** It took me so long to reply that I'll just post here because I don't want this message to be buried in the comments.

Ahem.

I am the most fortunate writer!

I met God Ye at a Glory doujinshi convention in the winter of 2028. He was buying books for Su Mucheng who was sick at the time and couldn't come.

When he was browsing through a section, I couldn't help but notice this man and want to do something for him. There was something about him that made me want to write his story, the story that he wanted to see but couldn't seem to find in the hundreds of books there.

I approached him and asked about the person he wanted to see, and that was how I found out the most wonderful story of God Ye and Su Muqiu!

The most fortunate one is me!

Thank you, **@Su Mucheng V** and **@Ye Xiu V**, for letting me hear and share your story. Thank you for entrusting me with the memory of your dear friend and brother. Thank you for letting me be a witness to all the glorious things you all had done in Glory!

I was the most fortunate one on that day in the winter of 2028.

I was most fortunate to meet you.

\*\*\*\*\*: I'm crying. I'm so sad I don't know the full story, but I can tell this is the most wonderful story of an author meeting her idol by chance and being able to help him write the most wonderful story. The best stories in the world! Thank you for meeting God Ye! Thank you for writing them! I love Sanxiu so much! I love Su Muqiu so much! I love to know and see the most happiest God Ye and Su Mucheng!

\*\*\*\*\*: Now that I know everything, I'm crying when I think that God Ye was trying to find something about him and his friend, but couldn't find a single mention of him anywhere. Him, who he thought had the best Glory! There was nothing! None of us knew anything to be able to write about the person he thought of most, thought had deserved so much, thought should have stood with him at the top of Glory... I'm really jealous of you, author, but I'm really glad that you were there and we could all see the best autumn duo in the world. The most happy God Ye! The mutual bond and support of the bestest partners in the world! I'm so glad you were there! Thanks for writing! Thanks for being there for God Ye and Su Mucheng! Thank you for approaching and being there in his time of need!

\*\*\*\*\*: The luckiest author! But we were the lucky ones too because such a wonderful series came out of such a chance meeting! By chance, we were able to know the most wonderful story!

\*\*\*\*\*: So jealous..... But I can't get mad because your works were so good and I got to know God Ye and Goddess Su more because of you!! AAAAA Thank you so much! I hate you because I'm his girlfriend fan, but just take my damn kudos and love and go!!! Be happy!! Just keep writing stories so that I will be too!!

\*\*\*\*\*: Is it bad that I ship a fanfiction author with God Ye? Who will write the original female character Fire Phoenix Rebirth for me?

\*\*\*\*\*: I know, upstairs, I know. I want to see this story being written out so much too. A chance meeting between Fire Phoenix Rebirth and God Ye at a convention. What are the odds and yet Su Mucheng wanted to go and Su Mucheng got sick and God Ye went and God Ye saw doujinshis that made him miss his friend and Fire Phoenix Rebirth saw that and had the courage to offer a stranger who turned out to be one of her most favorite pro players a chance to read the story he most wanted to see, but was never able to because the heavens were cruel. I hate self-inserts, but I want to see this story so badly, author! I promise I won't hate you if you write it! Not even if you ship yourself with God Ye!

\*\*\*\*\*: Thank you, Fire Phoenix Rebirth! While I am one of the jealous ones that wish I could have befriended or at least talked to God Ye too, I am so glad that you took the opportunity to approach him that day! I am so glad that you were the one to be able to hear these stories and share them with all of us! Su Muqiu and Autumn Tree and the Autumn Duo are babies that really deserve to shine somewhere and while I'm sad we never got to see and know them as we can for the pro players of today, I'm glad that they could still be known and loved and shine throughout the world today. Thank you for writing and sharing their stories! And although the Sanxiu part is probably the part that isn't real, thank you for making it Sanxiu! [laughs while cries]

\*\*\*\*\*: Thank you for everything, author! I love your works!

## Chapter End Notes

Notes:

[1] I told myself last time would be the last time and then said it again and again, but this time will finally be the last time. A bit rushed, but it was supposed to end back in the third chapter anyways. From the beginning, I was never planning to write anything about the regular seasons or playoffs! The story was YeDai and their Sanxiu story! It was really fun writing this though. YeDai is a fun couple! I have no regrets!

[2] YX plays in Thunderclap for Seasons 9, 10, and 11. Because he didn't have to start from scratch, but had the help of an already established team and club and a captain at his side, YX has more energy to continue on and stays another season. This enables him to play in World Invitationals. Although he became the captain and it is WXF who comes back and is recruited for the team leader job, YX is still recruited for non-logistical team leader duties because he is really the best at the job. After retiring from Thunderclap in Season 11, he returns to studying for a year, shadows his dad for another, and inherits the family business. DYQ stays in Thunderclap until Season 14 and gets married with YX after retirement. She becomes a full time writer of many best selling novels (though she already has a lot of money from pro-gaming and from her fanworks). During Season 15, the Alliance has an event where they invite retired pros back for an All Stars-like gathering and everyone (except the pros who saw the QQ reveal and/or wedding) are shocked to see YeDai dog food. The world finally learns about the winning Ye ship, but never find out that she is Fire Phoenix Rebirth.

[3] I want to say YeCheng (YQ/SMC hehe) is real in this AU because I think it would be funny if people think that YX is cheating on DYQ when they see a photo of YQ and SMC on a date. It causes a storm on Weibo, many people scolding YX, many people not believing it and trying to defend YX, and many people coming up with all kinds of theories, and then another photo comes out with all four of them together and the world finds out that YX is in fact a twin. And YQ is real. And 'YeCheng', the God 'Ye Qiu' and SMC that many people thought of during EE days is 'real'. But that's just me, you don't have to accept this haha.

[4] Every pro player eventually does find their happiness whether their counterpart is in or out of the Glory circle. I think love can always be found even if we don't always get our childhood or first love. And life moves on.

I like it when there's only one love for each person, but I have to admit that writing AllYe in the background is always fun because it's so chaotic! I didn't do it here, but I think it would be fun if JBT liked YX in the background too.

Just imagine all the betrayals JBT could do as ZZK's translator:

YX: I like ZhouJiang though!

ZZK: Senior!!! ZhouJiang fake, ZhouYe

JBT: Captain would like to say that ZhouJiang and ZhouYe are fake. I would also like to personally add that JiangYe is real.

ZZK: Jiang!

CYX: Applaud the plastic relationship of the brothers in Samsara.

DYQ: Hahahahaha, Captain Zhou would like to report the translation error of his vice captain.

[5] Although DYQ isn't what Father Ye and Mother Ye were expecting, so used to more traditional ladies, they are happy that their son is happy. DYQ is also a good writer, who becomes very well-respected and popular, so they think she is a good choice. She also has a lively character so the grandparents like her. When YeDai have children, Father Ye and Mother Ye happily retire and spoil their grandchildren. Both YX and YQ wonder

exasperatedly where in the world this parental love came from, remembering their own more strict childhood.

[6] Although YX and DYQ don't really mention their past to their kids, wanting them to try everything, think for themselves, and develop their own dreams to pursue - their kids find and fall in love with Glory, which is still continuing, on their own. Both YX and DYQ are amused - especially when their kids talk about how there was a legendary player that shared the same name as YX (they all think that YX had always been a CEO and DYQ always a writer). It takes quite a while for the kids to figure it out and they gape at how their dad really is *that* YX and their parents played Glory, were even one of the best in it.

[7] By the way, if you were wondering if I have any other F/M pairs that I like in TKA, it is BaoRou (BRX/TR) and ZhangChu (ZXJ/CYX). Lofter has some sweet BaoRou and ZhangChu c-fics. I won't give the links, too lazy for that, but if you look at my profile, there's a link to my friend's TKA Lofter library filled with summaries and links to the c-fics that she had read on Lofter. There's a lot of good stories on there that I would recommend. It's mostly Gen or M/M AllYe, ZhouYe, Sanxiu, YuYe, etc. though; F/M pairs are so rare. 🙄

[8] Thanks for reading and commenting! I enjoy them all!

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!